

# Common Ground

## The Englishman Meets the Negro

George W. Goodman

---

THE "FOREIGN-BORN VOTE" Yaroslav J. Chyz

MY SON, JONATHAN Milton Kaplan

I THANK YOU FOR THIS Langston Hughes

THE MAN WITHOUT MANNERS

George and Helen Papashvily

THE GRANDEUR AND MISERY

Leon Z. Surmelian

YOUTH CRUSADES FOR A BETTER DEMOCRACY

Sara Bloch

— *and others* —

50c.

A U T U M N 1944

# IS COMMON GROUND in *Your* Public Library?

MANY of our readers write that "COMMON GROUND is magnificent," that "its message was never more needed," that "it's a pity more people do not see it." One reader has suggested establishing a special fund for putting COMMON GROUND in as many public libraries as possible.

There are approximately 7,820 public libraries in the United States, most of them with limited budgets. Only some 725 libraries subscribe to COMMON GROUND, and a considerable part of these are school and university libraries. Will you help make COMMON GROUND available to the great mass of readers throughout the country who depend on public libraries?

\$2 will put COMMON GROUND into your own public library for a year. We shall write the librarian, announcing the gift and suggesting that COMMON GROUND be placed where readers will see it. At the end of the year we shall ask the library to take over the subscription.

\$10 will put COMMON GROUND into your own public library and into the libraries of 4 of the largest cities in the country not already subscribing. There are 3464 communities of 2,500 or more, in the United States, 397 with more than 25,000 population. \$100 would reach 50 of these cities.

Lasting peace can be built only on mutual understanding, equality and justice for all. That is the cause to which COMMON GROUND and the Common Council are dedicated.

Do we go forward to a wider understanding, to "common ground," or to robot planes and a third world war? You who have faith in democracy and who know that the forces fighting for it must be multiplied can help.

COMMON GROUND. Published quarterly: September, December, March, June, by Common Council for American Unity. \$2.00 a year; 50 cents a copy. Copyright 1944, by Common Council for American Unity, Incorporated. Printed at the Princeton University Press. Editorial and publication office, 222 Fourth Avenue, New York 3, New York. Manuscripts must be accompanied by stamped, self-addressed envelopes. Entered as second-class matter September 15, 1940, at the post office at New York, New York, under the Act of March 3, 1879.

# CONTENTS

TITLE	AUTHOR	PAGE
THE ENGLISHMAN MEETS THE NEGRO	George W. Goodman	3
WORD-MAKERS VERSUS WAR-MAKERS	Joseph Levin	11
MY SON, JONATHAN	Milton Kaplan	14
THE MAN WHO WOULD NOT STAY DEAD	Paul H. Oehser	17
GRANDPA WAS A RACER	Fern M. Crehan	18
I THANK YOU FOR THIS	Langston Hughes	27
THE FAINT DAWN QUICKENS	Louella MacFarlane	29
TO DER FUEHRER ON D-DAY	Mataileen L. Ramsdell	32
THE MAN WITHOUT MANNERS	George and Helen Papashvily	35
COUNTRY BOY	Carol Seeley	41
PREJUDICE	J. P. Shalloo	43
YOUTH CRUSADES FOR A BETTER DEMOCRACY	Sara Bloch	45
THE MEN OF THE MERCHANT MARINE (Photographs)	Marie H. Baldwin	53
THE "FOREIGN-BORN VOTE"	Yaroslav J. Chyz	61
DECISION	Owen Dodson	65
THE GRANDEUR AND MISERY	Leon Z. Surmelian	66
THE BALLAD OF OLEANA	Theodore C. Blegen	73
WHY WE CAME TO AMERICA: THE FINNS	John I. Kolehmainen	77
THE HEART'S TONGUE	Jewel Drickamer	80
STRANGE BREED	Jessie T. Ellison	81
ORDEAL BY CHRISTMAS	Milla Z. Logan	82
LEGACY	Leila Barrett	86
AT THE CORE	Gene Claussen	93

## DEPARTMENTS

The Press, 98	Miscellany, 103
The Pursuit of Liberty, conducted by Milton R. Konvitz, 95	
The Bookshelf, conducted by Henry C. Tracy, 107	

M. MARGARET ANDERSON

*Editor*

FRANK MLAKAR

*Assistant Editor*

*In the armed forces*

ADVISORY EDITORIAL BOARD

VAN WYCK BROOKS

MARY ELLEN CHASE

THOMAS MANN

PEARL BUCK

LANGSTON HUGHES

LIN YUTANG

ALVIN JOHNSON

---

COMMON GROUND is published by the COMMON COUNCIL FOR AMERICAN UNITY, 222 Fourth Avenue, New York City, 3, as one part of its program to accomplish the following purposes:

To help create among the American people the unity and mutual understanding resulting from a common citizenship, a common belief in democracy and the ideals of liberty, the placing of the common good before the interests of any group, and the acceptance, in fact as well as in law, of all citizens, whatever their national or racial origins, as equal partners in American society.

To further an appreciation of what each group has contributed to America, to uphold the freedom to be different, and to encourage the growth of an American culture which will be truly representative of all the elements that make up the American people.

To overcome intolerance and discrimination because of foreign birth or descent, race or nationality.

To help the foreign-born and their children solve their special problems of adjustment, know and value their particular cultural heritage, and share fully and constructively in American life.

The work of the Council is supported by memberships and contributions: Subscribing Membership, \$3; Participating, \$5; Co-operating, \$10; Contributing, \$25; Supporting, \$50; Sustaining, \$100 and over. All memberships include subscription to COMMON GROUND. Subscription to COMMON GROUND alone is \$2.

---

BOARD OF DIRECTORS: Nicholas Kelley, Chairman; John Palmer Gavit, Will Irwin, Vice-Chairmen; Robert D. Kohn, Treasurer; Sigurd J. Arnesen, Edward Fisher Brown, Allen T. Burns, Fred M. Butzel, Mrs. Thomas Capek, Malcolm W. Davis, Elizabeth Eastman, Sylvan Gotshal, Earl G. Harrison, James L. Houghteling, Mrs. James A. Kennedy, Frank J. Lausche, Read Lewis, Mrs. Jacob A. Riis, Josephine Roche, Marian Schibsky, Mrs. DeWitt Stetten, and M. F. Wegrzynek.

Read Lewis, Executive Director



## THE ENGLISHMAN MEETS THE NEGRO

GEORGE W. GOODMAN

I WENT to England with the American Red Cross as a Club Director a trifle too early to benefit much from the information that has now been accumulated specifically to develop an understanding of British customs and traditions. The knowledge I took with me was pretty inadequate. It had been gleaned from a few indifferent courses in English history in high school and college—courses that were not devised with any notion the student might some day actually visit England, a few novels that ran pretty well back into the years, and the current brand of movies on English life.

As I now review this questionable store of information in the light of the actual experiences I had, I confess my possibilities as a goodwill ambassador were pretty close to zero. For, as I recall it, all I knew summed itself up in a general distaste for the so-called ruling element and a pronounced pity for the economically disinherited. Just where the great middle group was in my deductions, I cannot even decide at this late date. Perhaps the only way to account for such a void in my thinking is that there is always a paucity of information coming out of any nation about this great middle group. This is true despite the fact they are the people

who carry the load in both fair and foul weather.

But in spite of my shamefully limited knowledge about this group in England, they were the ones with whom I came face to face upon my arrival, and it was they who gave me an entirely new concept of the English. I lived and worked with them, and thus I observed them in the throes of desperation and in the days when things began to look up. Above all else I learned that here is a nation that shows very little emotional variation in either extreme joy or sorrow.

The first and greatest surprise I received was in the size of Great Britain. I knew it was an island, but the knowledge had not impressed itself on my mind. As I began to observe the limitations set by geography, I began to appreciate the fundamental differences that might appear in American and British thinking. For people who have lived within the confines of an island for centuries, where green fields, gentle rolling slopes, and limited distances feature all activities are bound to have a point of view that differs greatly from the man who lives in a vast area where he wages an eternal struggle with distances, raging torrents, mountain ranges, and a wide diversification of the

natural elements. The very tempo of their lives must differ: one given more to deliberation and reflection, the other to impetuosity and adventure. This primary and basic difference entered into many things that happened during my stay.

I saw quickly that an Englishman might well not be interested in the 90-mile-per-hour horse-power in automobiles that the American is extremely proud of. He has winding roads, short distances, and the ocean binding him in. For much the same reason he is not too interested in high-pressure, lightning-like procedures; and when they are used on him, he will retreat into a certain quiet non-committal protective mechanism which does not mean he has given up a single iota of his original opinion but merely that he does not want to offend you by telling you he is not interested. For the same basic reason he resents having attempts to convince him in a matter plastered all over the highways on billboards, or dinned at him every hour on the hour over the radio. He is given to accepting or rejecting matters purely on the basis of their day-to-day performance. This is the slower approach to the matter of conviction and is what they call the conservative English attitude.

These traits, I learned, are as cemented in the Englishman's thinking as speed, vastness, and newness are in the American way of life. No amount of impatience or criticism can fundamentally alter the way of life of either nation. In fact, I saw innumerable times that if the average Englishman is pushed too hard, he will evince a remarkable degree of resistance, amounting to what some folks might call mulishness. On the other hand, I saw that a synthesis of certain mutually desirable traits that rise above nationalistic prejudices would not only be constructive in Anglo-American relations but in international understanding generally.

## II

I certainly did not comprehend all these things when I first walked into an English community of a half million people in 1942 to set up an American Red Cross Club. I did not really know what to expect. Then there was something unique about the thing I was to do. All my life I had lived in a culture where the implication was that no Negro could do anything on his own if all the contacts involved meant dealing with white persons in an administrative capacity. I had lived where it was assumed that all the white people of any given town or city would die at once if one of the managers of the local gas company was a Negro. Or if the mere thought did not kill them by the thousands, then the general ignorance of that particular Negro would be responsible for their being asphyxiated some night in their sleep. So I was really the object of considerable sympathy and concern among my American white compatriots. All this despite the fact I had read the same text books through college and graduate school, plus having had fifteen years of community organization experience.

But off I went, just the same, with seven competent men and women of my group, to indicate as nearly as possible that color really does not run off and that human impetus comes out of the mind, not the complexion.

We were confronted with the task of turning a badly blitzed structure into a club edifice that would house 300 soldiers overnight and afford daily cafeteria and recreational facilities. All these things were to progress in direct proportion to the working relationship we could build up with the British public and their established agencies.

Some folks are always writing treatises or making speeches on the impossibility of white and black men working together. Some even go so far as to say that it is in



the blood, science notwithstanding. But the bulk of the people in Great Britain certainly had not yet got around to appreciating the importance of this theory. The courtesy and civility with which they received me in my official capacity was based purely on an appraisal of my intelligence and approach to my specific job. Unostentatiously they began to appear from all walks of life to assist: the Lord Mayor of the City, a titled Lady, the wife of the president of one of the largest plane factories in Great Britain, Sir Stafford Cripps, representatives from the YWCA, the Ministry of Information, and the local University. They told us how very happy they were that we were there, and then went to work showing us they were sincere. The majority never bothered to mention until long afterwards the startlingly uncomplimentary things they had heard about us from some of our white American compatriots.

At this point I must confess we were not entirely able to make our way purely on the basis of performance. We did get considerable undesirable support in the form of stories that out-Remused the Uncle Remus stories. The first came to me from the lips of the Lord Mayor, who was plainly perplexed. This fine old gentleman told me of the experience of his City-wide Hospitality Committee that had been formed when first they heard that American soldiers were coming. The first Americans this Committee met—a group of officers—listened attentively to its plans. When they heard the report, they very gravely informed the Committee they were bringing two Armies, a white one and a black. The Lord Mayor said the Committee had not thought in terms of two Armies, but inasmuch as they were both American and Allies, this did not seem to present a major problem in their planning. Then the officers went into de-

tail. They suggested that no planning be done for the blacks because they were ignorant, uncouth, and savage; that it would be most unfortunate to confuse them with Colonial troops because they were a much lower branch of the colored race, a group that had been picked up on the coast of Africa.

My only response to this strange story was to laugh heartily and tell the Lord Mayor the timing and details of the gentlemen were bad. That it was true we had been picked up on the coast of Africa—totally against our will. But all of this picking up had been consummated years ago—some of it as much as 300 years ago—and in the interim we had stopped off long enough in America to help these gentlemen build a great nation before coming on to assist in England with the Second World War.

I can still see the twinkle in the Lord Mayor's eyes as he smiled his appreciation.

But the very funniest story I heard during my whole stay in England came from a Negro sergeant. He had been invited to dinner in a British home. He noticed that every chair to which he was directed had a cushion in it, though none of the other folk seemed to enjoy such a luxury. After dinner, when they were all returning to the library, he unconsciously moved toward a chair in which there was no cushion. Much to his surprise this gesture created a mild panic within the family group. All three members rushed headlong with cushions toward the chair he was about to sit in, the young man of the family sliding it under him just in the nick of time. It was not till two months later, when the sergeant was much better acquainted with the family, that the deep dark secret was revealed. The head of the household had mentioned to a white American that he intended having an occasional Negro to dinner. He was advised that such a step was dangerous, but,

## COMMON GROUND

if it was carried through, they ought to keep in mind that all Negroes had tails which made it impossible for them to sit in the ordinary hard-bottomed chair without first becoming extremely uncomfortable, then excited and dangerous. Hence the family had put cushions in all the chairs he sat in, and when he seemed intent on trying one that had no cushion, a small crisis developed.

All these things, while sometimes childish and malicious, were important because they marked milestones in the impact of two unprejudiced groups—one white and the other colored. While most of these stories were intended to set up an artificial aversion, they furnished an excellent opportunity to observe whether or not there is any such thing as “innate color antipathy.” For the majority of Englishmen had never laid eyes upon a person of color until the American armed forces moved in. They had nothing to go on but observation and rumor, for they are certainly not given to reading American history, literature, newspapers, or magazines.

But it ought to be said that as honestly devoid of color prejudice as the average Englishman is in Great Britain, just as honestly amazed were some American whites to find there were English-speaking white people in the world who could not make themselves hate another individual because he was colored. A preposterous story I heard from a very intelligent young Englishwoman indicated the frantic efforts made by some Americans to alter what they felt was an unfortunate frame of mind:

A young officer was making a talk on America to a group of this young lady's friends. In the course of the gathering he was asked about the reasons for the intense feeling against the American Negro by some members of the armed forces. She said he attributed it to the fact that

Negroes were treacherous and could not be trusted. To emphasize his point he told them that no white man in America is required to stop on a red traffic light late at night in the larger cities because one never knows when a Negro will dash out of the shadows and slash one's throat.

### III

This whole matter of artificially conditioning the English public to color prejudice had to be done overnight through terrific high-pressure tactics, the reasonableness of which could seldom be justified in the minds of the British. And, as I suggested earlier, the English do not take kindly to pressure. This of course does not mean that the Englishman does not have his own personal prejudices, but merely that he does not absorb those of other people simply under pressure. Watching his reaction to this onslaught was extremely interesting. He extricated himself neatly from the situation by setting up his own measuring rod. It consisted of three things: first, behavior; second, ability; third, the inclination of the visitor to respect English customs and traditions. Then, in general, he proceeded to ignore all color and racial differences where Allied soldiers were concerned.

He saw the American Negro going into churches, theatres, restaurants, buses, and homes, conducting himself as all other civilized people. He found no innate tendency upon the part of this soldier to be obstreperous or to violate the rules of English society. He found that this black soldier carried his war responsibilities with an amazing amount of zest, despite the handicaps under which he served. He stood by and watched these same soldiers startle English dock workers by unloading vital cargoes in record time. He saw boys with no previous engineering experience absorb the techniques with a rush and go on to construct air fields and hangars far



## THE ENGLISHMAN MEETS THE NEGRO

ahead of the fondest schedule hopes. He met him on the highway at midnight and at dawn, as he labored to develop what is today one of the finest Army convoy systems in the world, a system that has made the terrific bombings of the Continent by the American forces click.

But perhaps nothing made a more indelible impression upon the rank and file of the English people than the fact that these blacks were gracious, always manifesting a sense of humor and a friendly disposition. They marked this particularly where matters of English tradition and customs were concerned.

I shall never forget a sight I saw on my second Boxing Day in England. I watched approximately three hundred underprivileged English children being unloaded from Army trucks by Negro soldiers who were giving a party for them at a Red Cross Club. Two things struck me especially. First, the ring of genuine joy in the shouts of the children who had witnessed so much horror and such little joy for almost five years; and, second, the look of gratitude on the faces of the English men and women who stood by and watched. It made me feel that such expressions as "Stygian blackness" or the "blackness of despair" had no connection with the potential kindness of humanity; that perhaps the association of evil with blackness is merely an unfortunate figment of the imagination.

The graciousness of the Negro plus his inclination to be self-effacing had an astounding conformity to the Englishman's conservativeness. It did not matter that the Negro had acquired his over long years through bitter experience and that the Englishman had absorbed his chiefly from his environment. The important fact was that it established a common ground for understanding.

One other factor struck me as being of more than passing significance. There

is no question that the economic experiences of people largely fashion many of their reactions. About 60 per cent of the British public live in normal times within the income level of three pounds ten shillings a week—between fifteen and sixteen dollars in American money. This is about the income level of Negro workers in America in normal times because of the limited calibre of employment open to them.

### IV

Unlike the American Negro soldier whose experiences up to the time he landed in England had been generally full of disappointments and bitterness so that he was inclined to be skeptical and cautious and reserved, the white American soldier had been reared from childhood under the illusion that he was a potential President or at least a Congressman, a product of the greatest nation on the face of the earth. It was therefore pretty impossible to hope that a short training period, a new suit of clothes, and a boat ride would enable him to sublimate these concepts sufficiently overnight so that they would not crop out as a problem in someone else's country, especially in a nation where the President concept does not enjoy over-popularity and where people are inordinately proud of their own country and its history. Add to this the average American's love for and faith in such things as central heating, skyscrapers, assembly-line production, high-speed cars, master highways, privately owned radio stations, and credit buying—none of which is over-popular in England—and one had a perfect hodge-podge for disagreement.

I had an opportunity one night in a small pub to mark the type of resentment that can easily develop. Three white American soldiers, evidently out on a spree, had reached a point of hilarity

seldom attained by an Englishman. (Englishmen and Europeans generally seem to drink purely as a social manifestation and not to become intoxicated.) Earlier in the evening these boys had been bowling. Now bowling in England is called skittles, and they were laughing loudly over this strange name, as well as the fact that the alleys were not up to American standards. For in England the alleys are not nearly as pretentious as you would find in almost any American city, and many of them are a part of a pub.

One of the soldiers hit upon what he thought was a very funny pun. He suggested rather loudly that the condition of these alleys was such that they ought to have a picture of a black cat hung in front of them and entitle them "Scat-Alleys." All three howled with glee at this suggestion.

In the corner of the pub sat an elderly Englishman who had been listening to the entire conversation. When the pun about skittles was concluded, he got up and moved toward the soldiers, smiling and asking them to have a drink with him. They agreed and, when the drinks came, the Englishman began to ask questions. He first inquired how they would entertain him if, after the war, he came to America to visit. The boys swung into this with glowing descriptions. The elderly man waited for them to subside and then asked, "What do you think would be the reactions of your wives if, shortly after my arrival in your homes, I began to move your furniture around to suit my taste?" The soldiers looked at him as though he had lost his mind. One rested his glass on the bar and went directly to the point. "Brother, my old lady would raise hell with you. You would never get away with that with her!"

The old gentleman's face lighted up. "Jolly well right she would be, too, son, for it would be beastly bad manners for

any Englishman to walk into her American home and try to change things to conform with his special English tastes." Then he drained his glass, said "Cheerio," and left.

I am not sure the American soldiers got the point, but the Englishmen in the pub looked pleased. Here was the good old English way of "telling folk off" about minding their own business where English customs were concerned.

Because the American soldier does spend a good deal of his off-time in the English pub, it is an excellent source through which to mark the impact of American and English custom. For the pub itself is uniquely an English development, for which there is no counterpart in America except perhaps the neighborhood drug store in outlying communities. There, sometimes, neighbors will drift in, in the evening, for no other reason than to meet folk and talk a bit over a bottle of Coca-Cola or an ice cream soda. In England the pub is just such a source for community fellowship. Neighbors gather to talk over various issues from community gossip to world problems. They will sit over a glass of ale or stout for hours, or perhaps play cards or darts.

But the fact that the pub sells liquor has led many American soldiers astray in their deductions. They connect it in their thinking with the American saloon. If they see the same individual showing up night after night, they may associate him with a "bar-fly." This, in turn, may encourage their going up to him, clapping him on the back and saying, "Pal, you hang out here regularly, don't you?" At home, the chances are they would be correct in their deductions. But in England the individual stopping in every night may well be one of the most substantial citizens of the community; he is merely pursuing a practice his ancestors enjoyed generations before him. There-

## THE ENGLISHMAN MEETS THE NEGRO

fore he will not only resent the American's familiarity, but likewise the implication behind the remark. I have seen that mistake made and watched the reaction of the Englishmen assembled. It was not good.

### V

Nothing catches the eye of the newcomer in England more quickly these days than the variation in military uniforms. There are more representatives of the military interests of various nations than have ever before been assembled at any one point in the world—all with hopes, all with problems. The problems are kept pretty well under control: every group has its case, yet they feel a certain responsibility not to feature it over and above the greater cause.

Yet the problem of color, though peculiar to the American forces, kept spilling over into the general stream of things at the most awkward spots, since Americans manifested an inclination to sell it outside their special group. Beside Englishmen who were faced with it, Frenchmen, Czechs, Norwegians, Belgians, Dutch, and other groups who had little idea what color prejudice was all about found themselves confronted with it because of their friendships. I heard a Free Frenchman ask a white American officer one night in a restaurant, "What possible difference do you make between a German that wants to direct and fashion individual freedom of choice in people and what you try here with this black American?" This to me summarized better than anything else I heard in England the questions that lurked in the back of many foreigners' minds about the American color problem.

White Americans themselves were in utter confusion in this whole affair. Naturally enough, there was no unanimity of opinion on the matter. One section would

insist that the American Negro soldier was savage, uncultured, and therefore undesirable; another would indicate a complete lack of feeling or knowledge about the Negro, one way or the other; still another insisted the Negro was an integral part of the American nation and consequently no better and no worse than the rest. It was exactly the same division of opinion one finds in the average American community, with those in the minority screaming in England, too, the loudest and therefore being heard most frequently.

The Englishman, however, caught the real brunt of the argument, because the performance was staged in his home. And it was especially difficult for him because he had made no preparation for anything save absorbing an American expeditionary force as comfortably as possible.

It is no good to bring up the problem of India in this connection, because there is a vast difference between a problem thousands of miles away and one that is walking, talking, and laughing right in your midst. Here, if you are encouraged to start off under certain misapprehensions, the difficulties multiply. For instance, you start off looking for tails and end up being embarrassed; you look for marked laziness and find a marked degree of outstanding labor; you worry about savage behavior and, when you look around, these so-called savages are giving parties for your war orphans and even subscribing to adoption funds. You go home completely perplexed about the problem one night and you snap on your radio for relaxation, and there you hear the most plaintively beautiful choral singing you have ever heard. Then the announcer tells you this is a choral group of these same black savages singing in conjunction with Roland Hayes, another of the savages who is one of the outstanding tenors of the world. The next day you

## COMMON GROUND

peep into a copy of the American Army's Stars and Stripes, and there you find that thirteen of these savages have just finished the Officers Training School in Great Britain with outstanding records. And then that evening you read in your own English paper that hundreds of civilized white Americans in a city named Detroit have set upon the relatives of these black savages and done them to death.

So the Englishman was perplexed. He could never quite understand why these blacks came with such doubtful reputations and failed so completely to live up to them in England.

One of the most impressive long-time demonstrations of good feeling between the English and Americans that I know about occurred in one of the largest cities in Great Britain and involved about 300 Negro soldiers. The type of work they had to do made it imperative they be located near the center of the city. They were therefore housed in private homes in the very center of the best residential section. In this area resided any number of retired Naval, Army, and Civil Service workers—people who are familiar with the English Colonies because they have spent a great part of their working lives there. I mention this because it seems reasonable to assume that if there were a group in England that would be suspicious and prejudiced toward American Negro soldiers it would be this group. They would know things the rank and file of Englishmen would not.

But this group of Negro soldiers lived in that community for approximately a year without any incident or expression of ill feeling. They conducted themselves so well that when it was announced they were being moved out to build a camp site, scores of letters poured into the Command from individuals and community organizations expressing extreme regret. The letters emphasized the fact that these

Negroes were the best behaved soldiers they had observed. This expression of opinion was so widespread that Stars and Stripes carried an editorial entitled Good Neighbors, indicating what a fine contribution American soldiers could make toward better Anglo-American relations by proper behavior. Only—no mention was made of the fact that these were Negro soldiers.

The majority of these black boys were from the deep South where they are supposed to grow particularly savage and vicious. Many of those I talked with had never had a ride on a train until they were inducted. Just why they did not go on the rampage in the heart of a community where most of the able-bodied men had joined the forces and left their wives and daughters unprotected in the long total-blackout nights could never be explained to a "white supremacy" Southerner. To me and the English people of that community, it was merely because black men are no more vicious and dangerous than any other civilized men.

England was truly a wonderful place to have served with the American Red Cross and the armed forces of the United States. It was wonderful because of the chance it gave to see the disintegration of many fallacious theories on the whole problem of color. There was complete repudiation of a great deal of the supposed sociological and scientific drivel that jams the bookshelves of a great many public and university libraries of America.

I did not come away with the feeling that the Englishman is an extraordinary human being, but I do have the feeling that the English proved beyond the shadow of a doubt that it is possible for people of different shades of skin to live side by side in peace and harmony. I likewise came away with the feeling that this would be the normal impulse of the

## WORD-MAKERS VERSUS WAR-MAKERS

average English-speaking white family the world over if someone did not make a business of maliciously deceiving them with erroneous propaganda.

The Red Cross Club which loomed at the outset in some American minds as an impossibility is now one of the best working organizations in Great Britain. Further, there are now twelve others of a similar nature in England. In not one case has there ever been a major problem based upon the fact that a Negro administrator was in charge and had to conduct all the affairs in conjunction with a white community.

Working relationships were built warm-

ly and easily. It can be done all over the world just as soon as men stop beating themselves into a frenzy with false theories on race.

---

*George W. Goodman did his undergraduate work in Lincoln University and his graduate work at the New York School of Social Work and Boston University. He has served on the national staff of the Boy Scouts, the YMCA, and before going to England with the Red Cross was executive secretary of the Washington Urban League.*

## WORD-MAKERS VERSUS WAR-MAKERS

JOSEPH LEVIN

I AM glad I am in the Army. It has given me a chance to live with men I never would have known in civilian life.

There is C. T., for example, who says, "Having spent most of my life with at least semi-intellectuals in the theatre, I was under the impression that most of the world agreed with me and that intolerance existed only among the most stupid. Meeting a larger slice of life in the Army, I am shocked to find that intolerance does exist in educated classes against races and religions."

Now there's a point. Being a Jew, I never, or hardly ever, would have come into intimate contact with anti-Semitic "intellectuals." But here in the Army I have no choice. I live with them, I eat with them, I observe them. And I try to find out why they are the way they are.

I believe an army consists of the men who make it up. If this is so, I must also believe that no army fights for ideals. The ideals are made by word-makers, the battles by war-makers. The soldier fights for his life, for superior position, for comfort, for the defeat of his enemy. That's as far as he goes. The guys above the whole thing say their armies are fighting for freedom, for liberty, for a hero-folk. I don't know whether this is right or not. But it seems strange that the fellows who fight should think so little of what they are fighting about. They came into the Army with all kinds of prejudices, beliefs, and convictions. What some of them are fighting for is directly the opposite of these credos. But they keep fighting. And, what is funnier, they keep thinking just as they did before.

## COMMON GROUND

Take T. W. He was a high-salaried civil service employee, a fine stenographer and typist, a good Catholic. He holds a bachelor's and a master's degree from Columbia. Even tried for a Ph.D. but never got it. I don't know why he gets drunk so regularly, but when he does—oh, boy!

Here he comes now, garrison cap askew, reeling and slouching and slinking all at the same time. He (also at the same time) manages to screw up his face into a malicious sneer or leer or whatever it is. We know what to expect. He'll look at someone drunkenly and, after reeling for a thoughtful moment, will come out with all the stupid, prejudiced remarks he can think of.

"You lousy guinea. Now that I see your stinkin' country I wonder how you ever got into America in the first place."

"Look at this Jew. You think you're smart, eh? Well, we'll beat you yet. Don't you worry. We'll keep on fighting you until there's not one of you left. You're immoral. You're heathens. You're cheap fish peddlers selling only for the money you make. And you sell stinkin' fish at that. We'll beat you, we'll beat you, we'll beat you."

Now, what I would like to know is, what's this fellow fighting for? At least, why is he fighting with the American Army? Isn't he on the wrong side?

Not all the guys are so impolite, of course. Some are very gentlemanly. There's the fellow who will try to be very objective—even sympathetic and understanding. But still the same old bugaboo will crop up and make him wonder. Like C. B., for instance.

C. B. is a self-centered guy always looking out for his own good. But that's all right. That's how to get along. You sure learn how to look out for yourself in the Army. Of course he's always looking out for the good of the company, too. But somehow

what's good for the company always seems to be good for him.

"I'm just a dumb guy, see? I never had any education. I never studied. But I got horse sense. I just look at the facts and you don't need an education. All you got to use is common sense. You look at all the soft jobs in the Army—desk jobs, paper jobs, special service, all those easy jobs. And who do you find in them? Jews. I'll bet all those jobs are filled by Jews. Now they are the ones who should be fightin', shouldn't they?"

I compliment him on his scientific attitude. Looking at facts shows a good logical mind. That's real common sense. Then I ask him for facts. How many soft jobs are there in the Army? How many Jews are filling those jobs? What is the percentage of Jews in the Army? What is the percentage of Jews filling those soft jobs? What is the background needed for those jobs? Have the Jews got that background? Were they assigned to those jobs because they were needed there or did they get them by some underhand methods? How many Jews in combat outfits? The percentage? How does this compare with the percentage of Jews in the population?

"Aw, there you go. What are you—a lawyer? What the hell are you getting so technical for? How the hell do I know?"

Now here's a guy who thinks he is fighting some sort of Jewish war. But still, if he had his choice, he certainly wouldn't do that. And yet he is fighting. I wonder why he can't see his inconsistency.

And, incidentally, I wonder how he would explain the fact that he is in special service. He is not a Jew.

Well, he came into this thing with his own private little prejudice and no war is going to change it.

Then there is D. D.

Now here is a character for you. A wonderful wit. He can have you reeling



## WORD-MAKERS VERSUS WAR-MAKERS

from verbal blows in two seconds flat. His idea of a swell time is to get somebody's goat. He loves to startle you by doing and saying outlandish things.

"I haven't learned a damn thing in the Army. Well, no—that's not true. I learned how to make my bed. But who wants to learn that? I'll never make my bed myself anyway.

"If I weren't such a coward, I'd get out of the Army. I'd chop my leg off. I don't need it. I always used cabs anyway. And, besides, you can get around pretty well on those modern artificial legs."

His favorite goat-getter is something like this: "Sure Hitler's a smart guy. He knows the score. He's right. He ought to drive those French and English into the sea—and all the other stupid peoples of Europe that are no good." Generally he lumps practically all of Europe into this group. "The U.S. should rule the world because we are the only decent people in it. Hitler should have a part in it, too. He's smart. He's smart to have done what he did. Peace should be maintained for the U. S. To hell with the rest of the world. Many people ought to be killed anyhow, like the French and the English. The French lost the war and the English caused it."

I know he is only talking for effect. He really doesn't believe all that.

"And those chops"—he always calls Jews "chops"—"oh, boy, Hitler really was on the ball there. What a fine job that was. Ha, ha, ha."

I know he is only trying to get my goat. That's how he has fun. You can't blame

a guy for feeling the need for some fun in the Army. He would be delighted to see me flare up. But I don't. In fact, I rather like the guy. He gives me many laughs. He is very witty in an unprintable way, and I know he is only having mischievous fun.

But when half a dozen other fellows pick up his technique, not understanding that he is only kidding, and talk parrot-like in the same way and I know they are not kidding because they haven't got brains enough for that, well, then I get sore.

What I'd like to do some day is bring some of the word-makers down to the war-makers. You know, the fellows who talk about how we are fighting for the liberation of all enslaved and persecuted peoples, for freedom from want, from persecution, for tolerance, for justice and equality among nations and peoples. Well, I'd like to bring them down to the guys who are hammering out these ideals with blood and iron. I wonder what they would say when they heard the barracks echoing with "lousy chops," "dirty wops," "dumb Irishman," "stupid Polack," "stinkin' French," "damn limey," and "jig."

I wonder whether they would wonder, as I do, whether there isn't something wrong somewhere.

---

*Joseph Levin is the pen name of a staff sergeant who has been overseas for more than a year. Before joining the Army, he was a teacher of instrumental music in one of the New York City high schools.*

## MY SON, JONATHAN

MILTON KAPLAN

MY SON, Jonathan, is only ten months old and everyone smiles at him because everyone smiles at a baby. I wonder how old he will be before he learns that the word *Jew* is an epithet to be spit out of curling lips. I know that some day that will happen because there is hate all around him. The pretty little girl who always plays with him ran to us the other day. "A lady pushed me," she cried. "She must have been a Jew!" The girl is no more than five years old but she has already learned her lesson. The Jew in 1944 A.D. is still an ogre.

I understand the little girl and can forgive her easily. But what can I say for her parents, who are living in a land of liberty? What can I say for Representative Rankin, who got up in the halls of Congress, the seat of democratic government, to read a list of his critics, lingering with obvious relish on every Jewish name? What can I say for the New York City teacher who declared in class: "It's too bad Hitler is on the other side and can't take care of the Jews here too"? What can I say when I hear the dangerously clever parodies of popular and patriotic songs maligning the Jews being sung with enjoyment by school children? And what can I say when I read this lying jibe in the attractively printed slips which are circulated surreptitiously: While John J. Hennessy was the first American killed in Pearl Harbor, and Colin P. Kelly was the first American to sink a Jap ship, and John P. Buckley was the first American to sink a Jap ship with a torpedo, and "Butch"

O'Hare is the greatest American air hero, and John J. O'Brien was the first American killed at Guadalcanal—Abraham Lipshitz was the first American to get four new tires? It's funny, and people who read it grin and put the slips into their pockets to show the folks at home.

These are no sporadic occurrences. There is organized hate all around us, rubbing the skin of our consciousness raw to be stung by the salt of events. For to be a Jew is to be acutely conscious, to be painfully aware. We examine everything suspiciously, apprehensively. Each tiny news item concerns us. We didn't laugh at Hitler in 1930. We knew his significance then. We suffered with Spain and with Czechoslovakia, and with every little nation that fell. Even now as we read the newspapers every day we find salt for our wounds. There is the report on the FEPC in which the New York Regional Director declares that "the tendency to deny persons employment at their highest skills because of their religion is mounting rather than dropping in the face of acknowledged need for production." There are reports of anti-Semitic outbreaks in Boston. There are reports of juvenile gangs that prowl the parks of New York. We know what that means. The gang surrounds the victim. "Are you a Jew?" they ask, and then they beat him senseless, not impersonally but passionately because there is something there that they have been taught to hate.

We read Senator Taft's statement in the Columbus Dispatch: "It is an inspira-

## MY SON, JONATHAN

tion for me to come back from the artificial voices, often with a foreign accent, which are raised at Washington, to get in touch with those who really believe in America. . . ." We begin to wonder. Of course, perhaps he didn't mean anything vicious by these words, but why did he have to mention foreign accents? And why can't a person with a foreign accent believe in America? And whom did he mean by artificial voices? We can't help wondering.

And in the midst of a war for principles which make anti-Semitism an anomaly, we are thrown on the defensive. The United States would, according to a statement read at the sedition trial in Washington, "send every boy over 16 to fight whoever the Jewish masters commanded." We protest that anti-Semitism is but one manifestation of fascism, and we trace the war back to Manchukuo and Spain to prove that the Jews represent merely one eddy in the cataclysmic flood. We mass data to prove that Germany and Japan had been preparing for war for years. We deny hotly that the Jews were at all responsible for the United States' declaration of war, and in the midst of our vehement denials, we can't help reflecting how wonderful it would have been if the world *had* fought for the sake of the Jews, or for any other oppressed minority; if the nations had cried: "Hold on! These are our brothers!" What a triumphant moment in civilization it would have been if every man reading his newspaper in 1932 had called out: "I won't let you persecute a people!" Then we could have answered proudly: "Yes, we went to war because of the Jews."

But we know better. People reach a saturation point very quickly. Hitler is still killing the Jews, but then, they are far away. The Jews were massacred in Warsaw, fighting gallantly in an epic struggle against overwhelming odds, but

Jews are always being massacred, and the Warsaw incident made little stir in the national consciousness of America.

The accusation is then made that the Jews are not contributing to the war effort, and again we spring to the defense. We point proudly to all the Jews in the Army, to the lists of Jewish casualties, to all the Jewish heroes—knowing all the time that those who accuse will not be influenced in any way by all the facts we can muster. If Jews become members of Selective Service Boards, then they are deferring other Jews. If they become air-raid wardens, they are living in peace and comfort while Christian boys are being killed on the battle field.

We are on the defensive so much that we are thrown off balance. We find ourselves wincing when we read that a Jew has been arrested for operating a black market or violating price ceilings. We unconsciously transfer his individual crime to our racial conscience. (If we don't, the anti-Semites do it for us.) We find ourselves cheering when we read that the first American of the invasion forces to land in France was Jewish. We begin to apologize for success, and almost in the same breath we boast of it. We deny that Jews are very influential in finance, in Hollywood, in radio, and in Washington. We prove triumphantly that of the thirteen National Broadcasting Company directors only one is Jewish, failing to see that we are guilty of an inverse form of anti-Semitism ourselves. Why shouldn't all thirteen directors be Jewish, if need be? We accept with equanimity the convenient solution of the problem devised by the New York City high school principal, who divides all honors, positions, and responsibilities as equally as possible among the Catholics, Protestants, and Jews, achieving a mathematical kind of tolerance, which is, intrinsically, no tolerance at all.

## COMMON GROUND

Yet we are proud that Lehman, Morgenthau, Einstein, and Baruch are Jews. Max Baer wore the Star of David on his boxing trunks because he knew very well that it would draw thousands more to the arena, anxious to cheer a Jewish champion. And the New York City big-league baseball teams have been trying for years to discover a Jewish star who will catch the imagination of the crowd and increase the attendance figures accordingly.

These reactions are contradictory because the accusations against the Jews are equally contradictory. We are first warmongers and then pacifists. We are communists and capitalists. In order to defend ourselves against these charges, we try desperately to justify our position in American life when we should need no justification at all.

They say that the Jew is a man of peace. He is. The entire history of his culture has been a history of the triumph of the human spirit. But because he believes in the spirit, he will fight when the very structure of culture and civilization is being threatened. This is the war the Jew is fighting, and he is fighting all the harder for peace because he has never lived in peace.

That is why Jews have volunteered by the thousands in this war. When they are killed in battle, there is mourning but no complaint. Jews, along with other Americans, have given up important civilian positions to get into uniform. Jewish soldiers rarely have to be educated and indoctrinated. They know what the war is about. Older men have become air-raid wardens and war-bond salesmen, meeting resentment and revilement, but going on with their work. Jewish men and women are quietly donating their blood to the Red Cross because they want to take an active part in this war against oppression.

The Jews scarcely regard these contributions as sacrifices because they are fight-

ing for the only way of life in which they can exist. And they are fighting resolutely for a victory which they know will not solve the Jewish problem. It is clear by now that the surgery of war will not extirpate the roots of anti-Semitism. For one moment, perhaps, we might have hoped that with Hitler would perish all fanaticism and bigotry. We have abandoned that dream. Fascism will be defeated, but already its tendrils have branched into the veins of American life. After the war there will be rejoicing, but we are afraid of what else may come with it. Let hard times come and there will be people, having lost loved ones, and others, having other reasons to be bitter, who will want to lash out blindly against something or someone. Let these difficult times come, and the excess of grief, resentment, and bitterness will need catharsis—and the Jew is the time-honored cathartic. Nurtured on headlines and slogans, many Americans may demand answers reduced to the simplicity of Yes and No. Somebody will have to be responsible for all these difficulties, and the Jew will be the easy answer, especially—even as now—if some of our newspapers and congressmen will furnish nudging corroboration. It well may be that even intelligent members of the community, aghast at the disorder and hatred, will murmur sadly: "Oh, these Jews, these Jews," and wish them far away.

Knowing all this, the Jew fights on because he knows that the test of civilization is the Jew, not because he is superior or inferior, but because he is the perennial minority. We can no longer pad our sensitivity in resignation. Evasion, suffering, and all the vicious forms of restricted tolerance will not be a satisfactory solution. The struggle against anti-Semitism is the struggle against barbarism. The Jew is not rebellious or truculent but he has learned to fight for freedom and right.

The Wailing Wall has often been the

## THE MAN WHO WOULD NOT STAY DEAD

symbol of the Jew, but the day for wailing is past. Never before, perhaps, has the Jew been so aware of the need for vigilance, unity, and strength, for this is the time for fighting, and the fight against anti-Semitism is linked inextricably with the fight against all oppression. That is why Jews throughout the world are enlisted in every movement for justice, tolerance, and minority rights. We know that the fight must be waged in peace as well as in war. We know, too, that it will be a long, long fight—in the home, in the school, in the

courts, and in Congress—until the world learns the only answer to Cain's surly question: "Am I my brother's keeper?"

Yes, my son, Jonathan, is only ten months old, but the doctor says he has unusually broad shoulders for a baby his age. I'm glad. I think he'll need them.

---

Milton Kaplan is a teacher in the New York City schools. His poem, "Here in This Pleasant Land," appeared in the Summer 1944 issue.

## THE MAN WHO WOULD NOT STAY DEAD

PAUL H. OEHSER

There was a man who died, who they thought had gone to be with God,  
Whom they put away as dead, in a grave, under the green sod.  
"That's the end of him," they said. "He won't bother us any more. . . .  
Ideas the man had . . . troublesome ideas . . . about peace and war,  
About men and nations. We don't like his ideas. We'll cast  
Them from our minds. He is dead. His dreams are dead and past."

No miracle occurred. The man did not rise up from the grave.  
You and I know that is not the way in which dead men behave.  
He slept the long, long sleep, but there was something that did not sleep,  
Something remembered about him that could make the still heart leap . . .  
Something remembered, something alive. Perhaps it was the words  
He had spoken, that went on and on, flying, like great white birds.

Even years and another war could not drown such eloquence.  
What are a few score years to wisdom and what are armaments?  
"We will forget him," they'd said. But while they were saying his name  
They remembered! He would not stay dead. It was as if a flame  
Had encircled the world, breaking out new in a million places,  
And you can not put out a fire that shines in so many faces.

Paul H. Oehser has appeared in *COMMON GROUND* before, with "Gedicht der Dankbarkeit" in the Winter 1944 issue. He is editor of the United States National Museum, Smithsonian Institution.

## GRANDPA WAS A RACER

FERN M. CREHAN

THEY can't go any faster than I can ride." Grandpa used to say it about his horses; then he said it about his automobiles. If he were here today, he'd manage somehow to take a trip by air, and we'd hear it again.

Grandpa was born in Kent County, England, in 1831. Oldest of a family which eventually numbered ten children, he outlived every one of them. He came to America when he was ten. Following neighbors who had settled in the Western Reserve country and who had sent back encouragement to their friends in England, his family set forth on a sailing vessel, with Black River, a small port on the shores of Lake Erie, as their ultimate destination. Black River is now Lorain, Ohio.

Prodded with questions about the long ocean voyage, Grandpa merely said, "It wan't a very big boat, and lots of times the waves were pretty high. Wan't much vittles left, time we got here, but none of us were very hungry, anyhow. We made up for it afterwards, though."

It was late summer when the family reached the end of their tiresome journey, and winter found them settled in a log cabin near the settlement of Elyria, Ohio. Great-grandfather cut wood and logs for the owner of the general store in return for the rent and the few supplies they had to have. According to Grandpa, "We lived mostly on johnny-cake and cornmeal mush, that winter. Tasted good, too, specially if there was a bit of treacle to pour over it."

In the spring, Great-grandfather traded

his huge watch for a cow. "Never tasted such milk since, even when we had to add a mite of water to make enough to go around." When I asked how they knew what time it was, after the watch was gone, Grandpa shrugged and answered, "Huh, we didn't need any timepiece to tell us when it was time to eat, and we went to bed when it got dark."

He didn't get much schooling. He couldn't be spared many days from the "easy end of the cross-cut saw." He managed to attend the little school only when the weather was too bad to work. He learned to read and write and spell, however, and to "cypher," as he called it. He could estimate board feet, capacities of cisterns or granaries, and compute interest and areas, with amazing speed and accuracy. He read farm magazines, whatever books were available, and the daily newspaper from front to back, with the exception of the reports of the doings of the "danged Democrats," whose existence and activities he preferred to ignore.

At the death of my mother when I was five, my father took me to live with his parents. Here I came to know Grandpa as none of his other grandchildren ever did. Time had evidently mellowed him since his own children were small, and he became my most loved companion. He had many interesting stories to tell, if I could only prevail on him to get one started. He had lived an ordinary lifetime before the advent of the automobile; he saw the beginning of paved roads, gas wells, modern farm machinery, and the



## GRANDPA WAS A RACER

later development of electricity for lights and power. He saw much of the spread in population to the western part of the country. He took part in the Civil War. He helped elect Teddy Roosevelt to the presidency. He followed with maps and news reports the progress of World War I. He was intensely interested in everything that went on. When he read of the doings of the Wright brothers down at Kittyhawk, he said, "I'd like to go up in one of them things, some day."

It must be that in one's later years the middle ones lose importance. Grandpa's stories were about the time when he was a young man, or about race tracks and the horses he had known in later life. He hadn't much to say about the Civil War, except that he had seen Lincoln once. He shook his head and changed the subject when I tried to get him to tell me about the assassination. When I got too insistent about his war activities, he told me abruptly that he had been "where the bullets were thickest." Delightedly I pushed my advantage. "Where, Grandpa, where?" He threw me an amused glance and said briefly, "Hidin' under the ammunition wagon."

I never heard an argument or a harsh word between my grandparents. Grandpa had been a man of good stature and strength, while Grandma was barely five feet tall, quiet and calm, and endowed with a saving sense of humor. Undoubtedly she always knew what I found out much later: it was she who made the important decisions, she who was at the helm at all times. If Grandpa had an inkling of the true state of affairs, he never gave any such evidence. True, his first words whenever he entered the house were, "Where's Mother?" and the answer was always the same, "Here, Father." Nine times out of ten the conversation would end there, as he sat down contentedly to read or went about his business.

One sunny spring morning, soon after I had come to live with them, Grandma said, "George, let's go and visit your brother John's family today." Immediately I was all attention, for the proposal offered a seven-mile trip in a buggy drawn by one of Grandpa's good horses, with a company dinner, and the possibility of excitement of some kind. My anticipation, however, almost turned to tears. Grandpa pushed his chair back from the breakfast table, grunted testily, "Shan't neither!" and headed straight for the barn. Grandma made no reply, but when the dishes were done she laid out my Sunday stiff-starched white dress and petticoats, my long black stockings, and polished, high-buttoned shoes. She ignored my questions as she scrubbed me with holiday thoroughness and braided my hair into tight pigtails. Suddenly the door burst open far enough to admit Grandpa's head. "Well, how long before you're coming? I'm all hitched up and waiting, on the barn floor."

We had a lovely trip.

Grandpa's hobby had always been horse racing, but until Dad and I came home to live he evidently didn't feel free to spend as much time with his horses as he would have liked. But when Dad took over much of the farm management, Grandpa stopped being a farmer and promptly began to devote all his time to training his stable. Grandma didn't seem to see anything unfair about this. Her chief concern was the possibility of accident or injury—which led up to the purchase of "Art Monagon," a tall sorrel gelding built on the general lines of a giraffe.

When I first arrived on the scene, Grandpa's racing stable consisted only of "Lena Rivers" and a little white mare named "Lucy."

Lena's beautiful dappled gray hide cov-

## COMMON GROUND

ered a treacherous heart and a malicious spirit. She would kick at anything or anybody, without warning. It was almost impossible to hitch her to the buggy, and on the one occasion she did consent to this fancied indignity (standing between the shafts like a lamb until the tugs and traces were fastened), she promptly demolished the front end of the buggy the moment the lines were lifted, in a frenzy of kicking. She had no objection to being hitched to sulky or training cart, but she wore a heavy kicking-strap at all times. She could go like the wind when she wanted, but any urging when she lost interest in speed would cause her to stand on her hind feet and throw herself sideways or backwards. Grandma worried herself sick whenever Grandpa took Lena out.

I think Lucy was only considered a part of Grandpa's stable so that he could say (and think) "them" instead of "her." She had no racing blood. She was out of ordinary light farm stock; she had a kink in her tail which made it point around toward her flank; and she had, in the vernacular, "stringhalt." This peculiar malady made her jerk her hind legs up quickly in a spastic sort of way, whenever she stepped over in the stall, and in fact until she was warmed up when being driven. Once Grandpa remarked he guessed she was trying to put her hind foot in his vest pocket. She was a gentle little thing and perfectly willing to earn her board by doing light work about the farm.

Grandpa much preferred Lena.

One day he announced he was going to enter Lena in the races at the county fairs in our state. Then Grandma went into action. One morning she and Grandpa drove away without me. They were gone all day. When I saw them coming down the dusty road, I ran to meet them. Of course Grandpa was driving, so it was Grandma who held the lead strap that

terminated at the halter of one of the queerest looking steeds I had ever seen. "Art Monagon" (already named for Grandpa's favorite brother-in-law) had long legs and a long thin neck and was a light chestnut in color.

Grandpa was as happy as a boy with a new top, and Grandma was happy because he was. In her commodious pocket-book was the new mortgage on the farm. Much as she hated debt, she preferred it to the potential dynamite she felt was packed in the beauteous Lena.

A day or two later the horse dealer arrived and led Lena away. Grandpa hated to see her go, but Lena's exit had evidently been the one condition on which Grandma was firm when planning the purchase of her successor. It wasn't a money transaction, however, for the dealer left in trade another little mare—"Thelma Crook," dark chestnut in color and quiet in temperament. It developed she could pace just fast enough to be disqualified for the slower races and too slow to win the ones to which she was eligible. She did, however, make a good-looking second horse for Grandpa's string, and Lucy was promptly moved to the part of the barn occupied by the work horses. From then on, Art and Thelma lived in the big box stalls, had the lion's share of the best oats and hay, and slept on a thick carpet of the cleanest straw.

That summer we didn't see much of Grandpa. He took horses, training carts, sulkies, and quantities of miscellaneous equipment to the barns of the track where the earliest races were scheduled. He bought a cot, a coal-oil lantern sort of affair over which he could make coffee or fry eggs, and he, like the other trainers, lived in a box stall adjoining those in which his horses were quartered. Here he spent the long sunny mornings "working out" his racers. He'd drive slowly for a while and then finally take them around

## GRANDPA WAS A RACER

as fast as they could go. When they were drenched with sweat and lathered under the harness, he'd bring them in, scrape off the heaviest of the lather, and cover them with a huge wool blanket. Then he'd slowly lead them round and round

Late in the afternoon on Saturdays, he would wheel into the home barnyard where Grandma would promptly join him. "He's a good trotter, Mother. He's all right. He did a mile in 2:15 yesterday—just wait till I get his gait settled." And



a miniature track until they were cooled off, and dry. A thorough currying and brushing followed this, and they would be put back in their stalls with feed and water, their day's work over. Afternoons, Grandpa spent with his cronies waxing and oiling harnesses, polishing buckles already shining, and swapping racing stories.

Grandma would listen, nodding and smiling, and say that was fine and she was glad. Then—"But, Father, how's your dyspepsia? Does it bother you?" Usually Grandpa didn't bother to answer.

On those Saturday nights and Sundays, Grandma always took pains to serve the foods that were Grandpa's favorites. Sometimes for supper we'd have a big

round apple roly-poly for dessert. This was an old-fashioned English pudding, made of a suet and flour mixture, filled with sliced apples and boiled for hours in the pudding bag. When done, it was carefully turned into the white stoneware bowl in which it was a perfect fit. Then Grandpa would cut a circle out of the top and stir into the fragrant middle a big cup of brown sugar and a large lump of butter. Memory of its deliciousness still lingers. Or, in season, this would give way to strawberry or raspberry short cake, dripping with juice and butter. Often the main part of the meal would be baked potatoes and thin slices of salt pork from the barrel in the cellar, freshened in sweet milk, dipped in flour, and slowly fried to a delectable brown crispness. Then flour was added to part of the fat in the frying pan, the milk in which the pork had soaked was stirred slowly and carefully in, and the result was a smooth cream gravy that blended the meat and potatoes into a perfect whole.

Grandpa preferred chicken pie to chicken cooked by any other method, so it often appeared on the Sunday dinner table. Nobody could beat Grandma when it came to making biscuit crust. She used home-made buttermilk in which lurked plenty of tiny specks of butter. This did it no harm.

We had plenty of vegetables, but we didn't know the meaning of salad. We did have lettuce dressed with vinegar and sugar, and sometimes we had sliced onions with thin slices of cucumber which had been treated to a previous bath in salt water to "take the poison out."

While preparing Sunday dinner, Grandma would pack a paper-lined bushel basket with a pot of baked beans, a couple of loaves of home-made bread, sugar cookies or doughnuts or both, bacon, eggs, a quart jar of milk for his Sunday supper, and anything else she thought he would

enjoy. This basket, carefully covered with a clean dish towel, was swung under the seat of the two-wheeled cart when Grandpa happily waved goodbye shortly after dinner was over. How she found time to fix all these things while cooking for four hired men in addition to the regular family, keeping the house (and me) in order, and doing the myriad tasks that a farm housewife and manager must do, is a mystery to me now.

Grandpa's hopes for Art were not justified that summer, and certainly Thelma didn't win any races. This was probably the reason Grandpa decided to build his own quarter-mile track up at the end of the grape vineyard the following spring. When the sun began to warm the mornings, he drove my father and the hired men relentlessly, moving everything out of his way on the barn floor. Dad built a shed to cover the family buggy, but the light spring wagon was pushed out into the weather; the old sleigh was hoisted with pulleys to come to rest on the stringers which crossed from one side of the haymow to the other—a perch from which it was never taken down. The big cupboard in the cellar, where Grandma had always kept her preserves, cooky crocks, pies, etc., was laboriously dragged forth and set up in the barn to house his large assortment of liniments, brushes, currycombs, scrapers, and bandages.

Then Grandpa got busy with pencil and paper and figured the layout for his track, complete with just the right curve. One morning he went up the lane with an armful of carefully sharpened stakes and a huge ball of twine. When he was done, he ruthlessly set the hired men to pulling out the grape vines which were in his way. These had been doing their best to help pay expenses for twenty years or more, but now they were comparatively unimportant. Then followed a hectic week of leveling the track, a job in which

## GRANDPA WAS A RACER

I had a part. I drove the team hitched to the stone boat weighted down with boulders, round and round, flattening out the rough spots and making a hard surface. Finally it was done, and the men could go back to the neglected spring farm work.

Then Grandpa began his training in earnest. Often he would say, "What you doing the next half hour, Mother?" and Grandma, busy as ever, would invariably rejoin, "Why, I don't know, Father, nothing particular, I guess." After the breakfast dishes were stacked, she would make her way up the lane to a designated curve and stand, stop-watch in hand, while Grandpa and Art (or Thelma) would sail magnificently by in a cloud of dust. Grandpa's shout of "How fast did he go, Keziahr?" was a phrase quoted gleefully for years by the neighboring farmers.

These solitary workouts finally palled, and Grandpa invited another old chap to train with him. This man, who had a horse and not much else, always stayed for dinner and tucked away plateful after plateful of Grandma's good food. Meantime his horse was being filled to repletion on our oats and hay. Finally Grandpa tired of such company, and one day when Old Ike said, "Can't see what makes my horse's knees so weak," Grandpa said, "Know a good remedy for that. When he's through eatin' his oats, rub what's left on his legs." Ike said, "But he never leaves none." Grandpa snorted, "Well, then, feed him enough so he does."

That summer Grandpa and Art raced the fastest of the local doctor's stable and won the beautiful light-weight wool blanket the doctor had put up as a prize. Fortified with this victory, he decided to enter his horse (whose mark had been whittled down to 2:12) in several harness races scheduled for the fall. He won third

money a time or two, and second once, but, in the meantime, he chose to disregard something all too evident to us—he was rapidly becoming very deaf.

Finally he announced he was going to race Art at Wellington Fair. This was only thirty miles away, and I was frantic to go along. Hadn't I helped groom our horse all summer; hadn't I walked miles in the sun cooling him off; hadn't I even had a hand in casting the lead toe-weights in the home-made mold? And polished them to a shining smoothness with sandpaper and emery? With this added weight on his big front feet, both Grandpa and I felt sure he'd throw them enough farther to avoid the interfering back hooves. I simply had to see that race.

Grandpa finally agreed to take me, but Grandma said a stable was no place for a fourteen-year-old girl. I finally coaxed her to say that if my cousin Eunice—the same age as I—would go along she might reconsider. At first Eunice flatly refused. She hated horse races, she didn't enjoy the smell of sweat and manure, she didn't want to sleep on a heap of straw no matter how well covered by blankets, she was not going to eat the kind of meals we could cook over that "stinky lamp." However, in a confidential mood a short time before, she had made the error of telling me a secret. Now I threatened to "tell all" to her mother if she insisted on being obstinate. She had no alternative, though her heart wasn't in it. She was glad to promise Grandma she'd see I "behaved like a lady."

So the hot early afternoon sun of a day in August, 1906, found us sitting in the grandstand directly across from the judge's stand. The race was on. For the third time the trotters scored past the starting mark only to be recalled by the bell. Again they came down, and my knuckles ached from their grip on the edge of the seat. I prayed God would

## COMMON GROUND

make the judges let them go now! But there it was again—that bell. One by one the drivers reined in their entries and slowly wheeled to come back—all except Grandpa. HE HADN'T HEARD THE BELL! Tears blurred my eyes and I could hardly see him turn his head to look over his shoulder as he noticed he was in the lead. Almost too late it was, too, but he turned, flicked the rein over the big sorrel's hip, and hurried back to rejoin the others. The judge waved him close for a reprimand, audible to all of us, and the fat man sitting behind me savagely chewed his cold cigar and growled, "They'd oughtta rule that old goat off the track. He's seventy if he's a day, and deaf as a post."

Grandma's training, aided by a dig-in-the-ribs by the sedate Eunice, held, and I said nothing. But I found little comfort in the fact that I knew Grandpa was seventy-five, not seventy.

Grandpa nodded politely to the judge's remarks. Again they scored down the stretch, Grandpa in second place but plainly afraid to give Art his head. Breathlessly I watched and prayed and heard the shout: "They're off!" Around the first bend Grandpa leaned forward to talk into Art's turned-back ears. He never used a whip. He was holding his place and Art was behaving beautifully. I could see Grandpa angling for the pole but, realizing that was impossible, he urged Art on. As they came down the home stretch, it was hard to tell which horse was in the lead but, as they came under the wire, Art was a nose ahead of the pole horse, and the first heat was ours. Later Grandpa chuckled. "Good thing Art's got a long neck!"

Nobody but Grandpa and I had thought he had a possible chance, and there was a moment of silence. Then, Grandma's admonitions thrown to the winds, I jumped wildly up and down, whirling to face the fat man, as I shouted

at the top of my lungs, "That 'old goat' is my grandfather, and he's the best danged driver in the state of Ohio!" When I looked around, Eunice had vanished, but I tumbled out of the grandstand to go help Grandpa unhitch and "walk" our prize. "She's my swipe," Grandpa told the other horsemen. My heart almost burst with pride.

"Guess it's time to quit," Grandpa gruffly informed Grandma when we got home. He didn't explain why he was through, but she knew. Besides, I told her all about it. "Too bad," said Grandma, "but it's for the best. It isn't safe for him to drive any more, but we won't talk about it."

He sold Thelma, pocketed the money, and told Dad that thereafter he could use Art for family driving. He didn't go near the barn except on those rare occasions when he and Grandma wanted to drive some place.

Grandma had been troubled with rheumatism for years. One autumn day Grandpa said, "Let's go down to Florida for the winter." For years there had been a standing invitation to do that very thing, for Grandpa's sister had a home there. Grandma was glad to go; she must have welcomed a rest. I had a step-mother by this time, and we got along fine. Grandma could go away without feeling she could not be spared.

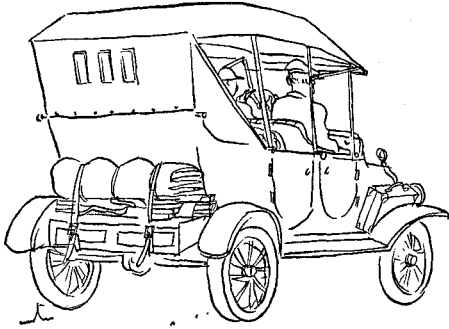
They went by train the first two or three years. Finally they bought a little cottage of their own, and Grandpa proceeded to make the sandy garden into the show spot of the town. Nobody else grew such mammoth sweet potatoes, such an abundance of large strawberries or peas, and nowhere in the little town were there such gorgeous roses. Certainly nobody else spent the amount of time and money for fertilizers to make them grow.

Shortly before the time to come back



## GRANDPA WAS A RACER

North one spring, Grandpa went to the bank to cash his quarterly pension check. When he came home, he remarked, "Bought a Ford. We'll go home in it," as casually as if reporting he had purchased an extra loaf of bread. Apparently



Grandma did not receive this unexpected news with as much enthusiasm as he wished, for he gruffly settled the matter: "If I don't know what I want when I'm eighty, don't know when I ever will!"

He'd not only bought a car but arranged for a boy to teach him to drive. The lessons began at once. The garden languished, but not Grandpa. He was burning up gallons of gasoline on the sandy rutted roads around the little town. Occasionally Grandma would go along, but usually she stayed at home.

As the time to start North drew near, Grandpa yielded to Grandma's plea that the boy be hired to go along, but he yielded with one reservation—they'd camp out on the way. He bought a folding tent, a camp cook-stove, and a couple of cots. Grandma elected to sleep on the back seat of the car. They covered the eleven hundred miles in about a week, and Grandpa let the boy drive most of the way.

Soon after they arrived in Ohio, a widowed daughter came to "take care of them." She was well over fifty, and while she resembled Grandma in stature she was like Grandpa in spirit and determina-

tion. She told Grandpa right to his face that it was dangerous for him to drive alone because of his "deefness" (a subject carefully avoided by the rest of the family), and she made it her business to see that he never got away without her. Before he could get out of the barn, she'd be firmly planted in the back seat, to his unconcealed disgust, and there she'd shout instructions over his shoulder. Finally he gave up driving altogether, but it was for an entirely different reason.

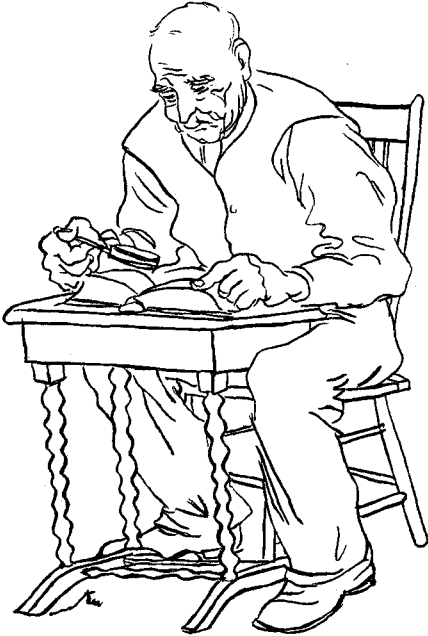
One day, after tinkering with the car in the barnyard, he started it up the incline and into the barn. There he planted a heavy foot on what he thought was the brake on the Model-T, and proceeded in low gear right through the closed roller door at the back of the barn, coming to an ignominious stop on the soggy manure heap. There he sat. Dad, hearing the crash, looked out the little side window and, realizing no actual harm had been done, watched without being seen. Grandpa sat a few minutes, then got out and walked up the lane toward the orchard. Dad and all of us were considerably amused—that is, all but Grandma. She hunted up the boy who drove, asked him to get the car out of its predicament and back into the barn, and added for all of us to hear, "I wouldn't say anything about this to Father."

The next ten years Grandpa made thirteen trips between Florida and Ohio, traveling always in the current Ford, piloted by the current boy, for he had bought the fourth one the year before he died at ninety-seven. He always insisted on camping out on the way. The first trip had been enough for Grandma, and her place was given over to Aunt Abbie, for he never managed to elude her care. Thereafter Grandma would see them off, rest a couple of days, then Dad would drive her and her little black bag to the train.

## COMMON GROUND

She always planned on getting to the other end of the journey a day or two ahead of her travelers, and they would find the little house warm and fragrant with the smell of cookery.

But he missed her welcome the last four or five trips, for one fall day she left us as quietly and peacefully as she had



lived. We were all glad that when death found her it came to the house where she had lived since infancy, where she had married and raised her family. She would have wanted it that way.

A great part of Grandpa's spirit went with her. Aunt Abbie could do her duty with far less argument. He wouldn't go South that winter, and he wandered aimlessly about the place. One day when he came in the door he started to say, "Where's—," but abruptly closed the door and went out again. He was lost without the companion of more than sixty years. He seemed to be happiest rocking the smallest of my father's second

family and would often sing to the baby a tuneless little melody which must have come back to him from his childhood:

*I had a little hobby-horse  
His name was Topsy-Gray.  
I tied him to a gate post  
And gave him a lock of hay.  
He could trample, he could trot,  
He could carry the mustard pot  
Through the town of Woodstock—  
Hey! Jennie Blue-cap, Hey!*

One day I found him bent over Grandma's worn Bible, a shaking finger keeping the place as he peered through a magnifying glass trying to read the fine print. He needed comfort, and he was trying to find it as he knew she would have done.

There isn't much more to the story. He and Aunt Abbie went back and forth as usual the next four or five years. There was nothing else to do, but he was just waiting. His last trip home was by train, but he didn't have any choice in the matter. He died in Florida, and Aunt Abbie brought him back to join Grandma and four of their five children in the little green cemetery not far from the old homestead.

Honest, high-spirited old Johnny Bull. He lived life to the fullest and he found it very good. The last time I ever talked to him he said with a hint of the old-time chuckle, "Well, in one thing I haven't changed a mite since I was a little shaver. I wished then that I was twenty-one, and I still do."

*Under the influence of Grandpa, Fern M. Crehan planned on being a jockey but abandoned that goal for an early marriage and a family. Now she raises Angora and Rex rabbits on her farm and does articles about them for various fur and other magazines.*

*The cuts are by Bernadine Custer.*

# I THANK YOU FOR THIS

LANGSTON HUGHES

His parents had moved North from Miami a year after Pearl Harbor to work in war industry in an up-state New York town. Now, for the first time since his induction in Florida, he was coming home on furlough from a southern training camp. His best buddy was a New York lad from Harlem, also on furlough, so they made the trip together. Being colored boys, they traveled in the Jim Crow car until the train reached Washington.

I knew the New York boy, but I had not seen him for a number of years when I ran into him and his southern buddy one night at the Stage Door Canteen, where I work on Sunday evenings. When the Canteen closed at midnight, the three of us rode uptown on the Eighth Avenue bus together. On the way, the New Yorker told me of this incident of their trip from the South.

The train was crowded and people were standing in both the white day coaches and the Negro half-coach. Corporal Ellis and Corporal Williams had, after much insistence, shared for a part of the night the seats of kindly passengers. They took turns sleeping for a few hours. The rest of the time they sat on the arm of a seat, or stood smoking in the vestibule. By morning they were very tired. And they were hungry.

No vendors came into the Jim Crow coach with food, so Corporal Ellis suggested to his friend that they go into the diner and have breakfast. Corporal Ellis was born and grew up in New York City and had been a star track man with his college

team and had often eaten in diners on trips with his team mates. Corporal Williams had never eaten in a diner before, but he followed his friend. It was mid-morning and the rush period was over, though the diner was still fairly full. But, fortunately, just at the door as they entered, there were three seats at a table for four persons. The sole occupant of the table was a tall, distinguished, gray-haired man, a white man.

As the two brown soldiers stood at the door waiting for the steward to seat them, the white man looked up and said, "Won't you sit here and be my guests this morning? I have a son in the South Pacific. Come, sit down."

"Thank you, sir," said Corporal Ellis. "This is kind of you. This, sir, is Corporal Williams, and I am Corporal Ellis."

The elderly man rose and shook hands with the two colored soldiers, and the three sat down at the table, the young men facing their host. Corporal Williams was silent, but Corporal Ellis carried on the conversation as they waited for the steward to bring the menus.

"How long have you been in the service, Corporal?" the white man was saying as the steward approached.

Corporal Ellis could not answer his question because the steward cut in saying brusquely. "You boys cannot sit there."

"These men are my guests, steward," said the white man.

"I am sorry, sir," said the steward, "but Negroes cannot be served now. If there's

## COMMON GROUND

time, we may have a fourth sitting before luncheon for them, if they want to come back."

"But these men are soldiers," said the white man.

"I am sorry, sir. We will take your order, but I cannot serve them."

The two Negro soldiers were silent. The white man rose. He looked at the steward a moment and then said, "I am embarrassed, steward, both for you and for my guests." To the soldiers he said, "If you gentlemen will come with me to my drawing room, we will have breakfast there. Steward, I would like a waiter immediately, Room E, the third car back."

The tall, distinguished man turned and led the way out of the diner. The two soldiers followed him. They passed through the club car, through the open Pullmans, and into a coach made up entirely of compartments. The white man led them along the blue-gray corridor, stopped at the last door, and opened it.

"Come in," he said, as he waited for the soldiers to enter.

It was a modern roomy compartment with a large window and two comfortable seats facing each other. The man indicated a place for the two soldiers who sat down together. He pressed a button.

"I will have the porter bring a table," he said. Then he went on with the conversation as if nothing had happened. He told them of recent letters from his son, and of his pride in all the men who were

giving up the pleasures and advantages of civilian life to bring an end to the ravages of Hitlerism in the world. Shortly the porter arrived with the table. Soon a waiter spread a cloth and took their order. In a little while the food was there.

All this time, Corporal Williams from the South had said nothing. He sat shy and bewildered. Then he drank his orange juice with loud gulps. But when the eggs were brought, suddenly he spoke. "This here, sir, is the first time I ever been invited to eat with a white man."

"I hope it will not be the last time," the white man replied. "The breaking of bread together is the oldest symbol of human friendship, Corporal." He passed the silvered tray. "Would you care for rolls or muffins? I am sorry there is no butter this morning."

"I can eat 'em without butter," said the Corporal. For the first time his eyes met those of his host and he smiled. Through the window of the speeding train, far off in the distance, but clear in the sunlight, you could see the dome of the national Capitol. But the soldier from the deep South was not looking out the window. He was looking across the table at his fellow-American.

"I thank you for this," said Corporal Williams.

---

*Poet and playwright, Langston Hughes is a member of the advisory editorial board of COMMON GROUND.*

## THE FAINT DAWN QUICKENS

LOUELLA MacFARLANE

THERE were three soldiers on a corner. John stopped the car and Ann rolled down the window and called, "Want a ride as far as First Street?"

The corporal said, "Thanks."

He climbed in. The blond young private followed close on his heels. The third boy raised his head, looked after the other two, but stood quite still. He was very big, very handsome, and very black.

Ann said, "Aren't you going our way, soldier?"

The Negro smiled and moved toward them.

Ann twisted the door handle beside her. It was locked and she fumbled a bit. The corporal spoke. His voice was high and a little surprised, like an adult prompting a child's manners. "Open the door, Charley," he said. Ann relaxed as the rear door clicked.

No trouble about it, thank heaven. You couldn't be sure with these boys coming from all over.

She twisted to see if they were comfortable. The blond private had moved closer to the corporal, leaving no more and no less than a third of the seat for the Negro. John started the car. He never talked much to their transient passengers. His civilian clothes made him self-conscious. It was up to Ann.

"Going to the beach?" she asked.

The corporal answered. "Yes, ma'am. We got twelve hours leave. Charley and me here are going to bowl. We like bowling some."

Charley nodded. He was younger than

his friend. His uniform fitted him tightly as if he had gained more weight than the Army had allowed for. His eyes were very blue and bright.

The Negro said, "If you'd let me out, please, at Tenth Street. That's as far as I go."

Ann said, "Of course."

John flicked the radio on. "Like some music?" he asked, his eyes on the road but his head turned to include the boys behind him.

The corporal said, "Sure. Whatever you folks want is okay with us, huh, fellas?"

Charley smiled and the Negro nodded solemnly.

Ann thought, *It's a good world. It's got some awfully nasty things in it, but it's a good world. And we can make it better. Those three nice boys in the back seat and John and me. It's just up to people like us to make it better.*

The commercial began, and John turned the radio low.

The corporal said, "That was nice. I like good music. Maybe we'll do some dancing out on the pier tonight, eh, Charley?"

Charley smiled and said nothing. The colored soldier was looking out the window. The corporal pulled a package of cigarettes from his pocket. He hesitated.

"All right to smoke?" he asked.

"Sure," Ann said. "There's a lighter in back."

The corporal said, "Folks out here sure are friendly. I'm from New York. Never been West before. It's sure a nice place,

## COMMON GROUND

California is. Think maybe I might settle out here after the war. Get me a girl and get married and settle right down."

Ann turned to the private. He blinked rapidly and blushed a little as if he knew he would be forced to speak. "You from New York, too?" she asked warmly, tender toward his youth and his shyness.

"No, ma'am," he said. There was a hint of a stammer in his voice. "I'm from Georgia."

"Oh," said Ann.

Only a flicker of an eyelid over his suddenly opaque eyes showed the Negro soldier's reaction, yet Ann was conscious that, without moving—by his very absence of all motion, perhaps—he had put an invisible wall between him and the white boy whose arm was pressed against his. Behind that wall was sanctuary. No man born feeling free to walk where his feet would lead him could enter there. Ann could hear John's voice, perverse amusement below his casual tone.

"Whereabouts in Georgia?" John was asking.

"Little old town called Pinehackett. Reckon you all never heard tell of Pinehackett," Charley added wistfully.

"Yes," said John, and his voice was suddenly cold. "We stayed all night in Pinehackett once. Remember, Ann? A long time ago. Back in '33. We were on our honeymoon. . . ."

Pinehackett, Georgia. . . .

Twenty miles from the main highway to Atlanta. A blinding rain had turned the clay road to clinging, sucking mud. There was a general store with a back room they could use for the night.

They bought crackers and cheese which they shared with their host and his two cronies who came into the store to chat rather than to buy. They sat on boxes pulled close to an oil-burner that glowed in the center of the low-raftered store.

Three feet from the reddened stove, heat and cold met suddenly like evenly matched wrestlers, locked together, neither giving an inch. Ann had turned her frozen spine to the fire and, in a short moment, felt the tip of her nose grow numb. The naked bulb above their heads burned with a dull orange light. Shadows and the cold hemmed them in.

Turnbull, the owner of the store, was a fat, bloated man whose flabby stomach rested on thin, unsure legs. His face was haggard with diabetes and the skin about his jowls hung puckered and dry as a turkey's. Ann felt his hospitality was born of curiosity rather than friendliness.

The other men were brothers, alike in the twisted submission of their bent backs and in the thin, spare brittleness of their bones, but dissimilar in coloring and character.

Sampson, the older, was dark and dry as if the sun had beaten him into the earth. His eyes were black and hard and he talked as if all the energy he had went into his thin snarling voice.

Alph, the younger brother, was pale and gaunt, his bleached yellow hair growing long and his eyes so light in color that at first it seemed he might be blind. He looked like an early Christian, burned out and sanctified by martyrdom.

The storekeeper's eager curiosity was hidden behind an offhand, half-apologetic voice. "Tain't true what I heard—that up North niggers run wild, knockin' white folks off the street?"

John said, "I've never seen that happen."

The storekeeper laughed. His bright malicious eyes were disappointed. "Didn't think even Yankees'd stand for that. No offense meant. I can see you're real quality folk."

Into the silence, Ann said, "Thank you." She moved closer to John and put her hand in his.



## THE FAINT DAWN QUICKENS

The storekeeper said, "Tain't true, neither, I reckon . . . I heard white folks and colored sit next to each other in streetcars and such."

"Yes, that's so," John said evenly, his hand a comforting pressure against Ann's.

The dark brother, the one named Sampson, the one with the snarling voice, said, "Nigger sat next to me, I'd kill the bastard."

Alph looked up and smiled, his face Christ-like in its compassion. He shook his head in gentle reproach. "No call to do a thing like that," he said, his voice a soft, patient, reproving drawl. "That happen to me I'd just beat hell out of him, so's he'd know his place better next time."

The private was still smiling in pleased surprise. Now that he had started talking, his very shyness seemed to carry him on. "Was you there in the Spring, ma'am? Pinehackett sure is pretty in the Spring. Little old blossoms comin' out on the trees and the grass a-sproutin' up in the hills."

The Negro soldier caught Ann's eye. "Tenth Street's next, ma'am," he murmured.

John swung the car to the outside traffic lane and pulled up to the curb. The Negro got out.

"Thank you," he said.

Ann smiled at him and John said, "Not at all. Good luck!"

The Negro glanced at the rear seat. "Goodbye," he said.

There was no answer. Ann turned her head sharply. Relieved, she realized it was not a snub. Their faces were friendly. The boy with the blue eyes was moving to the vacated place by the window. He smiled timidly, raised his right hand in a self-conscious gesture of salute. The corporal said, "So long, fellah."

John waited for the Negro to cross the street in front of them. As he went by, he gave them an open friendly look. John honked the horn twice and waved. He slipped the car into gear and they started on.

The private said, "You could knock me over with a feather! I never did expect to run into folks who'd been in Pinehackett."

The corporal said, "It's a small world."

The blond boy nodded. His shy blue eyes were fixed on Ann's. Silently, they asked her assurance and approval. "It sure is," he said. His soft sweet voice was very thoughtful. "Seems like it takes a heap of travelin' to find that out."

---

*Louella MacFarlane has done newspaper work, publicity, motion picture story analyses, and secretarial work. She is a member of several civic and political committees in Los Angeles, among them the Council for Civic Unity, which came into being after the "zoot suit" riots.*

# TO DER FUEHRER ON D-DAY

MATAILEEN L. RAMSDELL

June 6, 1944

Dear Herr Hitler:

Tonight I have been listening to the latest invasion news. In the next room my five-year-old daughter, who was frighteningly ill, rests quiet and cool once more. The raging fever which seemed to be sweeping her away from me last night (about the time the invasion fleet was sweeping against your fortress) is gone. And now that I have emerged from my own little private hell, I have time to think about you and how you are enjoying yours. And, do you know, it occurs to me I owe you a strange debt of gratitude. For you sent me a doctor, Mr. H., when I needed him desperately.

He is just one of many people whom you've eliminated in one way or another. This one was triply marked for such a fate. He was German, he wanted to enter the profession of medicine, and he was Jewish. And so he came to us a few steps ahead of your mass electrocutions and box-car gas chambers. He came to us by way of Italy, France, and England. After starting his medical education in Germany, he continued it in Italy and, upon arrival in this country, he had to pass state board examinations in English. So he's very well educated, thanks to you.

He came to us last winter here on a government project fourteen miles from the nearest town. He came to us on a fixed government salary that does not take into account night calls and emergency operations. Other doctors had tried it and given up in weariness and disgust.

There were so many greener pastures for them in this day of dire shortage. Then he came.

We read about his coming in the newspaper. It didn't say he was a gift from you, Mr. H., not in so many words, but when it gave his educational background and his name, then we knew. We saw him first in the Mess Hall. He sat at the table with the nurses, and we knew he was the new doctor.

He is short and a little plump. He has dark wavy hair (something like yours, Herr H.), large brown eyes (larger than yours), and a beautiful German accent. He smiles easily, albeit shyly; in this respect he differs from you. We thought he looked all right. Soon we came to know that he was all right.

He had hardly got settled when the flu epidemic hit us and people began to go down like ninepins—something like your recent defense lines. But he didn't go down. Through it all he trudged, never losing his smile nor his interest in his patients.

"All ridt," he would say to his latest flu victim after listening and looking and poking, "you must dake sulfa—nod too much—I do nod like to gif much sulfa—but dere iss a liddle inflammation and ve do not vant it to ged vorse."

My five-year-old Betty ran a very high temperature. She had already had pneumonia once, so I stood in the doorway as he examined her, my stomach in a knot, my ears cold with panic, my hands clutched together. He listened carefully

## TO DER FUEHRER ON D-DAY

and then seemed to notice my trembling. "You are too egzited. She iss a child who rons a high fever over nod much. Dere iss no pneumonia." But his tone was not critical of me though I was shaking foolishly.

He and Betty came to know each other well in the weeks that followed. Her tonsils were bad but we could not keep her free from cold long enough to get them out. It appeared to be an endless, vicious cycle. Besides, the spring was cold and very wet. It seemed that every week we had to call him for a fresh siege of fever. He would come in out of the rain, shake himself, and sit down by Betty.

"All ridt, Beddy," he would say cheerfully. "Now vat?" Then he would go through the usual routine—throat, chest, ears. Betty would squirm and resist. I would bend over to restrain her and he would wave me back.

"No, I vill egplain to her. Ve will not use force. Of dat dere iss too much already in dis vorld. See, Beddy, I am jus going to look at de ears. You are a big girl. You vill be ztill."

First one and then the other—he had to lance both her ears. He did not have instruments as small as he needed. This worried him a little, but he was philosophical.

"Ve haf not time to ged others. Ve vill use vat ve haf."

And he did. Betty was not a good patient. She kicked him in the stomach and he said, shaking an instrument at her, "I vill remember dat, Beddy, ven you are vell enough to fight." But the next morning, when he came to see her, all he said was, "Vell, Beddy, it doss not now make boom-boom in de ears, doss it?"

We dragged him out of his bed at night, we interrupted his one evening off a week, we caught him at meal times for questions. For endless weeks, it

seemed, we haunted him until finally we kept her free from temperature for two weeks and the tonsils came out.

All of us relaxed. After having been in the house for the better part of three months, Betty played outside all day long. She was invulnerable, invincible without those tonsils. She grew brown, fat, and rosy again. We actually got to the place where we did not freeze into a bird-dog point when she sneezed. We saw the doctor at the Mess Hall and we learned to talk of other things besides fever, sulfa, and tonsils.

Then yesterday, D-Day minus 1 (if we had but known), she came in and climbed up on her bed. "Mommy," she whimpered, "my leg hurts so that I can't walk and I'm cold. Mommy, I don't feel good." She huddled under the covers though it is June and the thermometer outside stood at 85. I laid my hand swiftly on her forehead and it was burning hot.

"Please, Mommy, more cover. I'm cold." Her chin shook and my heart lurched sickeningly. What could it be? No tonsils, no earache, nothing on her leg but a few mosquito bites which she had scratched and which we had liberally smeared with merthiolate. Could it be that virulent type of malaria which kills in twenty-four hours? We are in a malarial belt. Blindly I rushed to the 'phone and called for him.

He came in as usual, a slight smile, a guttural, "Hello." He sat down beside her in the usual way. "Vell, Beddy, you tink because you haf no tonsils you cannot be sick. You zee it iss not so." Then he looked at her leg and said immediately, "It iss infected. Dose mosquito bites, dey are bad plazes for dirty fingernails. Ve haf to pack it in hot epsom salts and ve haf to gif a liddle sulfa because it iss already jus a liddle in de bloodstream."

But the sulfa would not stay down,

## COMMON GROUND

and at four a.m. her temperature stood at 106 and she was delirious. Her eyes were focused on something above and beyond me as I leaned over her. Her lips were bright red and dry. She mumbled fearfully, "Mommy, don't take me out there. Please don't take me out there." Her hands almost scorched mine as she reached for me. The familiar cold chill of terror which I had experienced so many times with her last winter swept up and over me. She had been very sick before but never as hot as this, and never delirious. I thought insanely of all the children who have slipped away swiftly in those dark hours before dawn. I fled to the 'phone as to sanctuary.

The nurse was cold and professional.

"He has just gotten to bed after two emergency operations. I don't like to disturb him unless it's something very serious. Delirium is quite natural with such a high fever." Finally she agreed to speak to him and ask him what I should do. When she came back, her voice was disgusted.

"He is on his way over," she said crisply.

It was almost miraculous the comfort that his coming brought. His eyes were tired and bloodshot, but he brushed away my apologies for disturbing him.

"I like Beddy, too," he said briefly. In a short time he had changed to another sulfa which stayed down, he had told me calmly about a child with a temperature of 107, he had shown me how to give an alcohol sponge to reduce the fever, he had checked the icebag on her head and the hot pack on her leg, and was ready to go.

I began my frantic apologies all over again. "... but when it got to 106," I was saying when he interrupted me.

"Vas dat by mouth?" he inquired.

"Yes." I came to an abrupt and breathless stop.

"Dat is goot." He nodded gravely. "By rectum she would haf blown de top off, I guess." Then he chuckled. I felt some of the washboard stiffness leave my diaphragm. If he could joke about it—

"You don't think it has damaged her brain?"

He folded his stethoscope and waved it at Betty, who was already resting more quietly.

"I bedt tomorrow she knows more aboutt vat has happened tonidt than you do. No, dere is nothing wrong vid her brain—" he halted, rubbed his stomach reminiscently, and added with a twinkle—"even if she doss haf a disposition somevat like a mool!"

I don't know how you have spent this D-Day, Herr H., but that's the way I've spent it. Probably she wouldn't have died anyway. But I thought she was going to. Maybe one child's life isn't important when millions are dying. But mothers don't figure things that way. And that's why I say thanks, Mr. Hitler, thanks!

---

Mataileen L. Ramsdell teaches in the Relocation Center for Japanese Americans in Rohwer, Arkansas. Friends of CG will remember her for two earlier pieces in our pages: "Sabotage in B-8," Autumn 1941; and "Learning Must Be Motivated," Winter 1942.

# THE MAN WITHOUT MANNERS

GEORGE AND HELEN PAPASHVILY

THE cement in New York got to be too much for me. Miles and miles of it underfoot and still more heaped up on every side to make the buildings. Was like living in a stone vault. I got worried, too, that maybe no trees or grass or flowers were left in the world that didn't have a piece of wire fence around them to keep me out.

But where to go? I didn't have idea. Then one day, riding home from work on subway, I heard two men talking to each other. Seems one had just come from a place in west beyond the high mountains, a corner of America where two great rivers run down to join and then flow on together. And, how he described it, lots of Slavs living there, with plenty work and high pay for everybody. Sounded good.

So Saturday, soon as I got my pay, I went in the railroad station and bought a one-way ticket to this beautiful city. Pittsburgh in Pennsylvania, it was.

When I got there, to tell truth, it didn't look quite like I expected. But my conscience doesn't let me complain. Served me right, I realized, for listening to conversation that wasn't my business. Now I have to make the best of it.

So for two months I wore the pavements out looking for work. I found job finally in glue factory, but only lasted three days. The Boss talked so fast I couldn't understand what he wanted. Every night I hurried home to study some more in my word book, but im-

possible ever catch up with that fellow. He was already lifetime ahead of me.

So Saturday they gave me pay, \$6, and told me maybe if sometime I learn English better I can come back and they give me again job. A thin blanket for a cold night.

So back on the street to walk from factory gate to factory gate again. Now in my travels happened I stopped one day in barber shop, Ukrainian fellow owned. I wasn't speaking so perfect Russian either this time, but better anyway than English and we could talk together. He asked me if I work.

"No."

"Want work?"

"Want eat, so naturally I want work."

"Be here tonight nine o'clock. Bring your suitcase. Maybe I get you job."

"What kind?"

"Good job. Be here and you see."

Nine o'clock I'm back. Big fellow, rich silk shirt, sits in chair smoking 25 cent cigar while two bootblacks shine his shoes.

"Good thing he ain't a octopus," I said to barber in Russian. "Need an army to keep him polished."

"Shut up," he told me Russian back. "Mr. Black," he said in English, "this is the man I told you about. Likes a job."

"Good worker?"

"Yes, sir," barber said, "hard worker."

"Is he O.K.?"

"Yes, sir. Only off a boat a few months."

## COMMON GROUND

"Can you speak English?" Mr. Black turns to me.

Now no use to pretend I can, I thought, and lose again another job. Might as well he realizes from first. I shook my head. "No, I can't speak."

"Fine. Fine." Mr. Black rubbed his hands together and looked at me like I'm his Christmas pig and he's ready to carve. "Fine."

Well, shows you never can tell. One place is fine to speak English, next time is fine not to. That's how it is in America.

"Ask if he's ready to go today," Mr. Black tells barber. Barber passes on in Russian.

I shake yes and show suitcase.

So soon as Mr. Black is shaved and squirted all over cologne, we get in his car and start off. Twelve cylinder Cadillac. Engine sounds like special job.

Here and there we stop and pick up half a dozen fellows. Two Chinese, one deaf and dumb boy, a Mexican, old German. We're some bunch, all right. More for a circus side-show.

We ride and ride and ride. Barber said gonna be long trip and he's right. I sleep a while and about daylight I wake up to see smoke stacks ahead, big buildings, furnaces flaring up. Mr. Black stops the car and honks horn three times. Then he gets up speed, goes seventy miles hour down a hill through an open gate, and they close it after us.

We wash up. Man brings us a pot of coffee and some buns and after takes us on our jobs.

I get some tools. I'm supposed now to be repairman. O.K. I'm a repairman. I begin to work on the machines lying around the shop. A few hours pass. Some man comes by looks over my finished pieces. Nods his head. Pats my shoulder. That means I'm doing O.K.

This is gonna be a good place, my heart tells me. I work hard, study in the

nights, take lessons, be early and late on the job, get a promotion. Already I see myself with a big future, smoking 25 cent cigars, wearing rich costumes, only not two men to shine up my shoes. Looks show-off that. Noon whistle catches me just as I'm deciding if maybe Packard car wouldn't be better investment than Cadillac.

It's my first day, so I don't have any lunch with me. I look for a canteen some kind to buy pie, crackers, soda, hot dog. But I see men all passing in file through a door, so like the dog's tail I go along behind.

Big, big tables set out. Thick fried ham slices on platters, bread, potatoes, string beans, corn, butter in pound squares, help yourself how much you want. Looks like Easter party.

Funny bunch of men sitting around, regular league of nations. Dutchman next to me, and on other side some kind of fellow with ear rings. Maybe Sicilian. Down the table I see one man I'm sure is Syrian.

So we eat; after comes pie, coffee, ice creams. Whistle blows himself again and we start out. At the door I show money, I pay for my eat. Don't take. So I put away. Gonna dock from my wages, I guess. Well, is worth it. I'll come every day in here.

Afternoon passes and I walk by the fellow I think is Syrian. Seems he has the duty to burn sheets of tar paper in the furnaces. Funny job, dirty and smoky. I say coupla words to him. He's from Beirut, but a sour kind of fellow. I ask him where he lives. Maybe his landlady give me room, too?

"Live?" he tells me. "What's the matter with you. We sleep in here."

"Inside here? In the fabrik?"

"Sure."

"Eat supper here, too?"

"Sure."



## THE MAN WITHOUT MANNERS

"Why?"

He won't answer me.

Supper time comes. Two-inch steaks, fried potatoes, peas, carrots, salad, cake, fruits, and after big box of cigars passes around.

"Where do rest of the men eat?" I ask Syrian fellow going out. I think maybe if I can find another dining room there will be somebody I can pass two words with. Makes me sick, this eating with nobody to talk to.

"What men?"

"Other workers?"

"Aren't others?"

"Big fabrik like this?" I said. "You don't mean only us coupla hundred fellows run? Needs thousands or more."

But before he can answer, man in charge of dining room motions, so I follow him. He takes me in a big room full with beds, shows me one is mine. Nicely made up, clean white sheets, good blankets. I lay down and fall asleep to dream what a wonderful country is America. No mistake.

Next day passes. Twice I hear ambulance clang through the yard; once they unload two fellows at the aid station and the other time three, blood all over them. Well, dangerous work. Can't be helped. Lucky I'm repairman.

Finally comes Saturday and I see the others wait at a window, so I stand with them. I get an envelope and inside—my God—\$42 cash money. Nothing out for my eating and sleeping. Company's treating. Seven dollars clear for every single day I worked.

I'm so happy I can't wait to go in a town and spend. I find Syrian fellow. "Want to walk in village?" I ask him. "I buy bottle wine and we enjoy ourself."

"What's the matter with you?" he said. "Not in your senses?"

Well, I understand. I saw before men like him. Afraid to drink glass of my

wine for fear he has to buy second bottle. Crazy after money. I wish him luck he lives to enjoy what he saves, but usually it don't happen.

So I strolled around to look for somebody else. I came to two fellows in a club room the company had all fixed up for us—they're playing *duratchki*. *Duratchki* is a Russian game, so I tried to speak a few words with them. Some kind broken way they answered me. They was Finns or Letts or something. Way I understood from our conversation they learned to speak Russian the year they had their service in the army, and almost they were speaking as bad as me. Well, not my choice for ideal companions, but I invited them in town.

They refused me same way as Syrian. "You without brains. You want to come back, too, in ambulance?"

What's the matter with these people, I thought. I'm crazy or they're crazy.

"Look, boys," I said. "I ask you a simple question. Want to go with me, drink bottle wine, my compliments? Or no want to go?"

"They kill you outside," Finn said. "You come back with no head on."

"Who kills me?"

"Strikers," he answers in English. "Strikers."

"Strikers, all right. But why they strike me?"

"Strikers," he explains, "means who was working here before and now ain't."

"Why should they be mad at me? They quit. I came. People changing jobs every day."

"They don't quit for good. They stopped only because they not satisfied with what the boss gives them."

"They want the world then. Leave a good job like this. What do they expect more? Roast beef and free smokes. Clean beds and seven dollars a day. I be glad to spend a year here."

## COMMON GROUND

"They don't get that. They don't have no eats, no sleep. Two dollars fifty a day only; they earn. They want \$3."

"Well, costs the boss \$7 for me," I said. "Why doesn't he give them \$3? He can't be much of businessman."

"Big Boss only pays us \$7 until pretty soon the strikers get tired to wait and come back for \$2.50 again. Or maybe by that time for only \$2.25. Then our boss takes us on to the next place."

"On to the next place? Where?"

"Next strike."

"Who's our boss? Man who brought us? Mr. Black?"

"Yes."

This takes some thinking over.

They're playing cards again. Smack down ace. Smack down a jack.

"Pardon me interrupt your game," I said after a few minutes, "but do you remember how comes that word in Russian? Strikers?"

"Zabastovchik."

"Zabastovchik?" Zabastovchik. Yes, And now I remember. Certainly. Zabastovchik. "I think I don't like this place," I said. "I'm going away now. But Mr. Black's office, where's that?"

"Main building."

"By store rooms?"

"Next one. Brick."

I went across the yard and up the stairs. Door sign said, Knock. I knocked.

"Come in." It's Mr. Black's voice and there he's sitting, his feet up on the desk, a toothpick in his mouth.

"I'm leaving," I said. "But first I want you to give me paper that says I didn't know I was stealing."

"Oh, it's you." He took toothpick out of his mouth and put it behind his ear. "I thought you couldn't speak English, wise-guy."

"This much I'm speaking," I told him. "Give me paper that says I came here by accident. I didn't know I was stealing."

Then I'm going. We don't need argument."

"Smart, huh? You lousy Hunkies are all the same. Get ten dollars in your pants' pocket and you own the world."

"Hunky. Wise-guy. Lousy. Excuse me," I said, "but that isn't talk for a grown man. Write me paper and I'm going."

"Why, you square-headed bastard!" He jumped out of his chair. "I won't write you anything. Get out. Get out or I'll throw you out." He pounded his fist on the desk. "Do you hear me? Get out!"

Inside door to next office opens and tall, thin, gray man comes out. Mr. Black stops banging and turns to butter. "Yes, sir?" he says. "Yes, sir?" Ah. This must be Big Boss.

"What's the meaning of this?" Big Boss spits words out like they olive pits. "You know enough to keep your hoodlums down in the yard."

I was getting tired of these names. "Don't call me hoodlum," I said. "I just told your friend, Mr. Black, about that, and you're certainly man that's old enough to know better. Calling names! That's for little kids still with diapers playing in front of their mother's door. You're man. Act like one."

"Get him out of here."

Mr. Black sits down and starts to write me the paper.

"See, and for your information," Big Boss is pointing his long finger at me, "I'll personally see you're put on the blacklist of every plant in the United States."

"Probably millions of people in America never even heard of you," I said. "Worth a pound's weight of nothing to them, your blacklist. They'll give me job."

"You'll see about that."

Mr. Black finished writing. "Here's your paper. And when you go out the gate and the strikers beat the guts out

## THE MAN WITHOUT MANNERS

of you, don't blame me. You saw the men in the ambulance. Do you think that's right?"

"If I steal from a person his wife, his money, his house, his children," I said, "he has a right to stop me how he can. If I steal his job, I steal all those things at one time. Naturally he's gonna fight me for it. If he's a man."

"All right. Get out." Big Boss is mad. "One more word and I'll call in the

Mr. Black reached for telephone. But happened I was expecting this and got hold of it first. I put on the desk behind me.

"If you want to fight," I said, "I be pleased to fight you any time, any place. Suits me fine right now. But like a man. Guards? What do you try to do? Buy yourself courage like a pair of socks? Pay somebody to be brave for you?"

Big Boss' face is purple and his eyelids



plant guards. They know how to take care of people like you."

"I don't like people to threat me," I told him. "Makes it hard for me to go now without seeming I ran. You take back those words. Then I leave and we call it square."

"You know what those guards could do to you?"

"Kill me? In the war day by day I saw better men than me fall and never get up. Man was born to die. If not today, tomorrow. What difference it make?"

start to jump. Doesn't look like healthy man to me. Probably drinks too much to balance what he eats. "You'll be sorry for this," he said.

"Certainly I will," I told him. "I'm sorry already. You think I like to say such sharp words to you, gray-haired, a man old enough to be my father? Of course not. I'm ashamed. But it's your own fault. You disgrace yourself, calling names. Threatening."

Mr. Black whispered to Big Boss.

"No." His mouth is twisting so words

## COMMON GROUND

can hardly come out. "Let him go through the gates. It's easier that way."

"Goodbye." I got to door. "Can't everybody see the world through the same eyes."

They don't answer me.

I went back to the club rooms and got piece of paper and wrote four notes: one each in Turkish, Russian, Persian, and Georgian:

Dear Sir:

Please excuse my mistake. Happened I didn't know I was stealing your job. That's why I'm coming out.

Yours very truly,

I signed my name.

I pinned two on each of my lapels, and in my hat band I stood up Mr. Black's letter.

Then I got my suitcase and went through first gate. After this there was a closed yard about two hundred feet wide. I could hear the men yelling as soon as they saw me start across. "Open," I called to guard in tower at outside gate. He shook his head and pointed to the crowd. "Open!" I said. He released the lock. I took a good breath and went through.

When I came to, I was lying on a sofa and some lady was washing off my head. Four, five men standing around watching.

"We sorry," fellow with one eye says in Slavish. "Some our boys is too hot-tempered."

"That's O.K.," I said. I moved my head and tried my arms and legs. "No harm done. What happened?"

"You came out. Was little trouble naturally. Somebody knocked you cold. When you went down and they saw Black's letter, they were gonna kill you entirely."

"Why?"

"Letter says: 'This introduces my personal representative. Please treat him accordingly.' But one of the fellows said, 'Wait a minute. That scab-monger Black never told you the truth yet. Why believe him now? Some catch. See what the other letters say.' But nobody can read them. So they brought you here."

Well, I told them whole story and we made good friends. I stayed with this Slavish fellow and his family until I was better and then I went on the picketing line too with them. No smokes; no steaks; no \$7 a day there, but no Mr. Black neither, so it balanced out O.K.

Week later Big Boss decided to finish the strike. I guess he got tired paying that Syrian fellow \$7 for burning tar paper to pretend the furnaces were running when he could get men for \$3 to really fire them. Was smart businessman after all.

So my friends went back to work and they even got a job for me, too, in the repair shop.

But I decided not to take it. To tell truth, I didn't like to work for such a boss—man with no manners at all and—is awful thing to say—a man, in my opinion, who couldn't ever learn any.

---

As we go to press, the Papashvilys' book, of which this story is a part, is scheduled for publication October 25th as a Harper "Find." CG's pride and elation is mixed with some regret—that it will therefore be unable to bring its readers more chapters in the volume. But Helen Papashvily writes she is at work on her side of the family—on a sketch of her Irish grandmother—which we will hope to publish in an early issue.

Kurt Werth is the illustrator.

## COUNTRY BOY

CAROL SEELEY

THE clouds have settled down on our hilltop, and for several days we have been in the fog. In front of the house the open field is suddenly bound in, close to us, and the valley cut off, and in back the mountain is hidden at the first line of trees. It is quiet and mysterious, shutting out even the noise of the planes that pass overhead every day. But the birds are still there: we can hear them darting about in the clumps of white birches, singing through the fog. The country needed rain after a long dry month, and this gentle sifting has brightened the green. Everything is weighted down with water: as you brush past, branches deluge you with water and spring up released. After living in the city for nearly fifty years, the country's ways, so closely bound to weather, seem to me curiously affecting.

I remember a time like this last year, before the blueberries were ripe. I was out in our victory garden getting some early beets and lettuce, and the fog had settled in so close I could barely see the edge of the wood. I thought I heard someone walking, a muffled sound in all the quiet. Was it one of the dogs? Or someone coming up the hill by the short cut? There was no sharp noise—only the soft crunching of brush and the water falling off the heavy branches.

A young soldier came out into view, and I guess he was more startled to see me than I was to see him.

"Hello," I said. "I wondered who it was."

"I'm Peter Sawyer," he said.

"I guess it was the uniform—I didn't recognize you," I said. I knew he was one of Donald Sawyer's boys: I'd seen him down at the Post Office. I remembered him, too, bringing in the horses one evening at his father's farm. He was younger then, though—shyer.

"I got a furlough," he explained, and looked down into the fog where the valley should have been spread out. "You can almost see our house from here on a clear day."

The quiet folded in around us—only the song of a thrush came from the woods. He turned back in a moment.

"Nice garden you'll have here. Season's been all right, I guess."

"We've been having trouble with rabbits," I said.

"Yeah—everybody says so. Rabbits and mice get bad every few years—then they go away again. You won't be bothered next year now."

Together we looked over the garden—rows of light green sprouts and the earth soft, saturated with rain. He didn't mind though. He bent down to feel the shoots, and his Army boots sank deep in the mud. He gave me some tips which the amateur is reluctant to ask of the professional and grateful to have.

"I'd better be going," he said in a little while. He looked young again, his eyes perplexed—too young to have a farm of his own yet, but serious in a way that made you want to hold him or help him.

## COMMON GROUND

"Listen, we're driving down to the village in a minute. Can't we take you? It's quite a ways on foot."

"Thanks," he said, looking self-conscious for the first time, twisting his overseas cap in his hands. "I guess I'm just walking around this afternoon—I wanted to see the mountain pasture once—I have to be back at camp tomorrow," he said and smiled. "Well, goodbye—"

"Good luck," I called as he disappeared again into the fog.

Later in the summer the news came that Peter Sawyer had been sent overseas.

"What do you hear from your son in the Army?" we'd ask his father when we passed the time of day at the Post Office.

"He's fine," he'd say. "Had a card from Naples."

And one day we stopped by Donald Sawyer's house, when it was starting to be spring, with untidy patches of snow under the trees and the brooks full.

"I had a letter from Peter," he said. "Maybe you'd care to hear it."

He read it to us and I remember it didn't tell anything of the fighting or of the life of the Army, nothing about Italy or anybody he knew. Instead he began:

"I guess if I was home now we'd be after the maple syrup. The trees on the lower lot should be running fine this year."

He went on, remembering how they'd keep the cauldron simmering—cautioned about the place where the brook broke

across the road every year—remembered the time of year and the chores with care and patience.

"I guess if I was home now we'd be trying to figure out the apple crop already, even before the frost was up and the trees budded."

Yesterday we heard that he had been killed in action.

It is not the first death that has come to the community. The war has been close for a long time. There are Sawyers' graves in the Common that date from the Revolution. But now, again, and for a long time to come, it is a new heaviness that each one carries with him as he goes, alone, about his work.

With us the clouds have settled around the mountain again, and there are fewer rabbits this year—just as he said there'd be. But I have thought how far he had to go, carrying with him this country, his home.

"What seas—what shores?

And woodthrush calling through the fog . . ."

---

*Carol Seeley was graduated from Vassar in 1938 and has spent the years since then in France, New York City, South America, and Washington, D.C. While her artist husband is with the armed forces in France, she has returned to her parents' home in New Hampshire. This is her first published piece.*



## PREJUDICE

J. P. SHALLOO

WHAT is prejudice? I haven't it, but I know you have. You haven't it, but you know I have. It is nobody and everybody; it is everywhere and nowhere. It is on every street corner and completely invisible. It is the universal lover of mankind, and it hates every living human being. It is wrapped in the slogans of idealism and shrouded in the grave clothes of "experience." It is exclusive and inclusive. It loves Jesus and the Sermon on the Mount, but . . .

It believes in the first sentence of the Declaration of Independence as far as the "born and created." It agrees with everyone who voices the highest aspirations of the human soul. It hates all evil and recognizes no evil in itself.

It is a Jew making too much money, a Catholic trying to get the Pope installed in Washington in 1928, a white newspaper man resigning from the National Press Club because no one would serve the Dean of Howard University Law School in the Club dining room, a colored soldier standing on a bus over an empty seat, a good white Christian protesting a colored preacher in a white church, a marriage annulment because he didn't know she was colored, a white junior high school teacher protesting against colored teachers using the teachers' rest room. It's an "I'm sorry, all seats are reserved." It's a protest to the ship's captain that a Negro is in the dining room; an RCA official ineligible to keep his riding horse in a New York riding stable, though the horse was eligible. It is a "god-damned kike" trying to get de-

ferred status. It is paying taxes for universities one cannot enter, an immigration law that loves the woods around the North Sea; it is freedom from want for the Chinese millions as long as they stay away or come here at not over 105 each year under the quota.

It is "After all, would you marry a Negro?" Would you marry a head-hunter? . . . Forgive them, Father. . . . Now you take Bill Robinson or George Washington Carver or Marian Anderson, you know, there is a difference—even you will admit that. In the South we like Nigras . . . children of the race . . . irresponsible, care-free, happy. Yeah, a graduate of Harvard, but he couldn't satisfy the registrar of voters in a southern state by reading a section of the Constitution in Chinese. . . . It is the mission of the white man, the Myth of the Twentieth Century. It is Alfred Rosenberg, Houston Chamberlain, Cotton Ed, Gene Talmadge, Joe Starnes, Mr. Rankin. It is, I know, I know, another god-damned carpet-bagger, another New Dealer. Ha, ha, ha, he thinks foreigners helped build American industry. Ho, ho, ho, he thinks colored folks helped create the leisure class. He, he, he, he thinks the Jews contributed to the American way of life. Doesn't he know that native white Americans built this nation and today are winning the war with blood, brains, labor, and bonds? To hell with isms that were invented by Jesus, Lincoln, Wilson, and that enemy of righteous self back-slapping—Eleanor.

Prejudice is Walter White in a Wash-

## COMMON GROUND

ington Hotel with a white professor and the headwaiter telling Mr. White, "Your colored friend will have to leave." It's a camp in Maine where "only Gentiles are happy." It's a five-year-old boy asking his mother, "Am I Protestant, Catholic, or Jew?" and on learning he is Jewish saying, "Just the one I didn't want to be." It's a ball game in Maine where the rules were agreed on and a visitor, declared out, saying, "What can you expect from a bunch of kikes?" It's a separate graveyard for colored people. Suffer the little ones . . . except colored. It's a dual school system that keeps blacks and whites poor. It's the German "by nature is bestial, brutal, and destructive." It's "Yes, cap'n, no, cap'n," with the cap off. It's a railroad station "For Colored." It's a dark alley to a theatre, "For Colored." It's the rough-riding rear of the bus. It's "Don't you call that nigger Mister." It's all change at Washington, even though the fare is the same. It's "The Negro has no rights the white man is bound to respect." It's "Between me and white woman's virtue, to hell with the Constitution." It's American officials telling British folk to respect the color line. It's colored help on the garbage wagon when there are plenty of jobs. It's the colored winner of a state welding contest being refused a job in a shipyard as a welder. It's Eleanor Clubs because we can't outmaneuver her husband. It's "Some of my best friends are Jews." It's America for Americans (if they are white, non-Jewish, non-Catholic, no matter when they got here). It's "The color problem is strictly southern." It's "I had a Negro mammy and she was just like one of the

family." It's a partition in an official restaurant so whites and colored eat apart. It's two sets of football pictures, one for Texas A. and M. with no colored players, and the other for Manhattan with two colored players. It's a colored quarterback at N. Y. U. getting ill the Saturday they play Georgia. It's a frantic telephone call from an Atlantic City hotel management fearing there may be a colored sociologist in the scheduled conference. It's Dr. DuBois getting the works from white professors because he forgot his place. It's city transportation companies refusing Negroes employment as motormen and bus drivers. It's the American Medical Association.

It's a million and one incidents and experiences and humiliations and embarrassments and signs of contempt that originate from an amorphous fear that the Master Race may or will be overthrown by a handful of persons the Herrenvolk know are absolutely inferior. Without someone inferior to me, I am the only inferior one. This cannot, must not, shall not be. Others must be below me morally, socially, intellectually, naturally. I look down. Let others look up!

---

*Dr. J. P. Shalloo is assistant professor of sociology at the University of Pennsylvania. He was co-editor with Dr. Donald R. Young of the volume of The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, "Minority Peoples in a Nation at War," September 1942, and editor of the September 1941 Annals, "Crime in America." He is the author of Private Police.*

# YOUTH CRUSADES FOR A BETTER DEMOCRACY

SARA BLOCH

NEVER before has youth looked upon so wide a landscape of urgent reality in the world; never felt itself so powerful to cope with it. Unlike the youth of four decades ago who dreamed lovely worlds for themselves from the leaves of fairy tales and lived in them until brutally thrust into reality by the First World War, and unlike the next generation who felt they had been born into a world which from the start cheated them of their birthright and who therefore lived cynically and recklessly, this generation faces an existence that challenges the faith of older and wiser men—and faces it with courage and the determination to create a democracy that shall really work.

Where do they come from, these children and young people? From public and private schools, from high schools and colleges, from clubs and churches and unions, from rich homes and from poor, from American and foreign backgrounds, and from every corner of our country. They have read and seen and heard stories of the glories of American democracy, but they have also read and seen and heard of tragic distortions of the American ideal. They are dedicated to a re-orientation of the world they live in. Sometimes it's the youngsters who start out by themselves, and sometimes they are started by adults, but that makes no difference, really, for the tinder is ripe for the burning, and the light makes a great shining through the land and through the world.

The business of better race relations

looms large in all their projects. They tackle it with a directness that is more than exhilarating.

In New York City, for instance, some of the students at the Friends' Seminary suddenly became aware that there were no Negroes among them. They formed themselves into a committee, and in a short time they were engaged not only in an effort to enroll Negroes in their own school, but had interested students from various public and private schools in the whole question of race prejudice. This group became the Interracial Youth Committee.

Meeting in a public library, about forty of them discussed their own experiences with race prejudice. Had they met much of it? Had they indeed? Tensions were acute, in one school so severe that if a Negro girl in the cafeteria so much as stepped out of line, the white girls ganged up on her. Only the prompt interference of a teacher would prevent real violence. They wished the teachers would come out into the open and discuss these difficulties, as a means of overcoming them; they played them down, as if by so doing the difficulties would somehow cease to exist.

"The teachers are scared," said one of the girls. "When I reviewed Richard Wright's *Twelve Million Black Voices*, one said it was impassioned, distorted, and untrue. Some of us knew better, but many other pupils believe whatever the teacher says, especially if it is the same sort of thing their parents say. Parents

## COMMON GROUND

often have a very reactionary influence, for, even if we disagree with them, they keep us from going to gatherings where there are Negroes, and sometimes Jews."

"They don't influence all of us," said another—as indeed this meeting proved.

Later they gave an entertainment in a branch library, provided entirely by Negro talent. They sat about on the floor, listening to excellent singing and playing, white girls from the South finding themselves sitting comfortably next to Negroes. They felt they had proved something to themselves and were heartened to go on. Their next step was to arrange for a meeting at which a Negro graduate of a white college spoke on how it feels to be the only Negro in a white school. She spoke also on the best procedure to be followed in selecting Negro enrollments.

This summer the students will study the attitudes of the communities in which they find themselves and relay this information to the membership. The Interracial Youth Committee may wield considerable influence throughout the city. Eager to do a good job, it leavens its enthusiasm by seeking adult advice. The principal of the high school of Friends' Seminary is its counsellor.

Whether or not there is any connection between this group and a manifesto recently issued by the students of the New York Junior High Schools, I do not know. Perhaps it is the same deep springs of feeling that find simultaneous expression in many places. Whatever the fact, there was recently sent out by a majority vote of the student body a code of behavior which pledged, among other things:

"I will never knowingly, by word or deed, injure anyone's person, feelings, or property, in any manner. I will always respect the religious beliefs of others as I will respect my own."

According to the Associate Superin-

tendent of Schools, this was an "unprecedented experiment in student democracy; the first time in American educational history that a large body of school girls and boys had voluntarily signified their adherence to a code of moral conduct."

Youthbuilders, a very active organization in New York City, did not originate with the student body. It was organized by Sabra Holbrook, a young woman who in her experience as a social worker had come to feel that children could be interested in democracy in ways the schools were not using. Under the sponsorship of the Board of Education, with specially trained teachers as leaders, she has formed groups in various schools which are learning democracy by experiencing it. Embarked on projects of their own choosing, they use community resources of all kinds to gather their facts. Race relations are among the problems that absorb their attention.

There was, for example, the problem of anti-Semitism in one of the high schools. No one had seemed to recognize it until they made a study of the Nazi variety with its ghastly consequences. Why—the same thing could happen on their own block, there was so much bad feeling between the largely Jewish population of the high school and the Catholics in the neighboring parochial school. They approached the faculty of the latter school, suggesting that mutual acquaintance between the schools might prove both pleasant and profitable. At the inter-school luncheon which followed, each group found the other quite delightfully human and capable of co-operative enterprise. Many inter-school activities followed, and anti-Semitism was quietly laid to rest in that neighborhood.

More belligerent was another group. These youngsters went in for a frontal

## YOUTH CRUSADES FOR A BETTER DEMOCRACY

attack on a butcher who was spreading anti-Semitic rumors. "Reform or your store will be boycotted," they said in effect and, since it was their parents who were the butcher's customers, he forthwith reformed.

Another group took the Negro problem they were studying so seriously to heart they essayed to give a government authority who had lectured to them on this subject added information. At his friendly suggestion they write him some of the points they thought important, they composed a lengthy letter which, among other items, suggested a revision of the history textbooks "so that children in the future would not have to seek their information on the Negro all over the city of New York" as they had had to do. One peppery bit toward the end of the letter ran: "A passionate personal conviction arises only from personal knowledge and experience. If such knowledge and experience were part of your background, you probably wouldn't at our meeting have described Negroes as being a cheerful, singing people."

To understand how it feels to be a refugee, the Youthbuilders in another school which included a number of foreign children made a study of migration, beginning with the Neanderthal Man and following through to the latest waif to arrive on our shores. Unexpected horizons opened up before them. One child remarked: "If you get the facts and then act on your beliefs, you can change the whole world."

To help change at least some of it is the aim of Youthbuilders.

The United States Student Assembly consists chiefly of college students with a small admixture of high school members. It co-operates with liberal adult organizations and functions in thirty-one chapters on campuses scattered through-

out the country. It organized in 1943 as an affiliate of the International Student Assembly with headquarters in New York City.

It is a sober, studious group which seeks to acquaint itself with and act upon problems of national and international significance. It is extremely active in interracial affairs, stepping in wherever minorities are discriminated against. On some campuses Negroes have been admitted for the first time, chiefly through the efforts of the USSA. In some communities interracial conferences have occurred for the first time, at their instigation. In others, protests against the segregation of Negro blood have accompanied blood donations to the Red Cross as a result of suggestions made by the USSA. The plight of the Nisei brought forth a pamphlet which gave a comprehensive account of the history of what happened after Pearl Harbor, with instructions as to what students could do to build up public opinion against this discrimination, as well as what they could do in their own contacts with Japanese Americans to help relieve tensions. In Wisconsin, near the University, a restaurant discriminated against Negroes. USSA went into a huddle. On a designated evening, a group of white and Negro youths went together for an early dinner when the dining room was empty. The Negroes sat patiently before empty places; their white friends were served. Soon the restaurant became crowded. People stood in line against the walls. Still the Negroes waited. The white boys and girls remained in their seats, too. The proprietor was in a dilemma. The waiting customers might lose patience. His principles were involved, but so was his pocketbook. The pocketbook won, and the Negroes were served amidst the cheers of the waiting crowd. Discrimination ended. Time perhaps will erase the prejudice behind it.

## COMMON GROUND

Rounding out its first year of local and national endeavor, the ussa is gathering momentum to make of itself a considerable force in improving democratic procedure in America. It already has a membership of over five thousand. It seems bound to grow in the postwar years.

Negro campuses in the South are also pledged to work for a better American democracy. The Southern Negro Youth Congress, organized in Richmond, Virginia, in 1937, represents twenty-four Negro colleges and includes in its membership young people between the ages of fifteen and thirty, both in schools and out.

Precariously perched as they are on the very edge of southern citizenship, these young people are nevertheless intensely loyal to the region of their birth. They do not believe that migration to the North is a solution to their problem. They are working toward a better way of life where they are, not an easy decision to arrive at.

Other Negroes, young members of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, are already doing notable jobs all over the country. One group in Los Angeles keeps an alert eye on the Hollywood studios, eager to win them over to a truer portrayal of the Negro.

The whole city of Springfield, Massachusetts, is caught up in a monumental venture in the processes of democracy. Dr. John Granrud, Superintendent of Schools, is the dynamic leader of the educational plan which was suggested to his community in 1939 by the National Conference of Christians and Jews. With a well selected faculty he is developing in his heterogeneous community a kind of citizenship in which all nationalities, races, and religions work and live harmoniously

together. More than forty different nationalities and their admixtures compose this typical American city—a good proving ground for this sort of experiment.

Dr. Granrud's theory is that prejudice, whose foundations are ignorance and superstition, can be prevented and controlled by the same scientific and humane methods that have prevented and controlled contagious disease. He is working with the children in the schools primarily, but also with their parents and the whole community, for education cannot stop with graduation. In addition to the schools, he uses adult education classes, the press, the radio, moving pictures, churches, social work organizations, libraries—every phase of community activity.

Children, even before they enter nursery school, are prepared for a joyous school experience through pamphlets issued to their parents.

When they enter school under sympathetic teachers, small Rumanian, Irish, Finnish, German, French, and other Americans take their places side by side as equal members of a small human society. They absorb unconsciously the attitudes they will later discuss in their classrooms. By the time they reach early adolescence, the curriculum gives them an opportunity to discuss national and racial factors in an objective way. Controversial subjects are approached without fear by both students and teachers, even that most controversial subject of all—religion.

Youngsters study history denuded of its biases, even American history. They learn that their forefathers made mistakes as well as heroic gestures toward a new way of life. They study social problems and learn what it is in people that makes them susceptible to false and evil rumors and they learn how to overcome them.

In the seventh grade, the whole social science course is given over to a study



## YOUTH CRUSADES FOR A BETTER DEMOCRACY

of the contributions of older civilizations to modern democratic procedures. Here the children from backgrounds in other lands learn to take pride in the countries of their parents; learn that love of freedom is very old in the heart of all humanity; learn that American democracy is the fruit of democratic longings from all over the world, that it is flexible and capable of improvement.

The eighth grade makes a study of the contributions to a better daily life in both the past and present of the great world religions—Judaism, Christianity, and Mohammedanism. They learn how earliest man developed a religion in order to interpret the mysteries of the universe to himself and in order to put himself into harmony with that universe. They learn how, through the ages and in all lands, sects and denominations grew, how they influence today the lives of all. They learn how in America each man is free to choose his own religion. A by-product of this course was a festival at Christmas which combined the traditions of both the Hebrew and the Christian holidays. Many of the children in the group were Jewish, and the teacher had the youngsters study both the Christmas feast and the Jewish Feast of Lights. They found many points of similarity, the chief one being the Christmas star and the Chanukah candles. The result was a combined pageant created by the whole class.

The ninth grade makes a specific study of the contributions the various nationalities have made to Springfield. Each student looks up his own family tree and then studies those of the other students. He learns of the special characteristics of each land and what it has contributed in his own city to the culture of today. Thus his own community holds within itself bits of the whole world. It is cosmic and cosy at the same time.

The adult is also the province of the school in Springfield. The head of an industrial concern asked Dr. Granrud for his best stenographer. She happened to be a Negro. To the angry remonstrances of the management, Dr. Granrud replied that he had followed their instructions. In the conference that followed, he persuaded the firm to employ the young woman. Her work proved so good that not only was she retained but other Negroes later found employment in the same industry.

The press, too, comes in for education. Recently the son of Paul Robeson, an honor student, was graduated as president of his high school class. The newspaper reporter saw a dramatic opportunity to play up the rise of the Negro. Dr. Granrud saw otherwise. The lad was mentioned in the paper without regard to his color.

Educators everywhere are inspired by the achievements of the Springfield Plan of educating for a democracy, intellectually understood and practically carried out.

American Youth for Democracy has no school affiliations. It draws its membership from clubs, trade unions, churches, Y's, etc. Organized in the Fall of 1943 in New York City, it already has a militant membership of several thousand scattered across the country.

Its literature invites all of every political leaning, nationality, and race to join who will adhere to its doctrines, which declare in part: "I will not spread racial or religious prejudice or hatred. I will do all I can to help give other young people an understanding of why these anti-American acts weaken our country. I will help prosecute and punish the miscreants who work against American unity." A rather stern and Hebraic sense of justice, that.

AYD is sure of what it wants and con-

## COMMON GROUND

fidest of getting it. It is pugnacious and critical of much that goes on in our country but it is not given to cynicism. It courageously knocks at the door of government itself. When AYD petitioned against discrimination in the armed services, its detailed letters to the Secretary of War and the Secretary of the Navy asked for personal interviews. Courteous and carefully written answers came from both departments, and the AYD delegation was granted an interview by the Assistant Secretary of War. He agreed with some of their contentions and suggested that they, and organizations like them, could do much to mobilize public opinion against discrimination. This reception, as well as some of the friendly interviews with Senators approached on the subject of the poll tax, led them to feel that "The results of such delegations . . . are not always immediately apparent, but the cumulative effect of such action . . . is responsible for such progress as is being made in removing discriminatory barriers against full and equal participation of Negroes in our country."

AYD's work in behalf of Negroes is not always a battle cry. In April of 1944 this organization sponsored a memorial tribute to Fats Waller in New York's Carnegie Hall, with many white and black artists performing before a packed house. The Reverend Adam Clayton Powell struck the keynote of the evening when he said, "You can't play much on the white keys alone, and you can't play much on the black keys alone. It takes the black and white keys together to make real, rich harmony."

More restricted in ambition, and more local in scope, but important because of its influence in trade unions, is Pioneer Youth.

Conceived by David Dubinsky, and advised in its educational policies by John

Dewey and William Kilpatrick, it began life nearly 21 years ago as an experiment in education for citizenship for the children of trade unionists. It now includes some children of business and professional men as well.

Outstanding is the camp which it runs in New York State. Here youngsters come together, black and white, Christians and Jews, without social distinction of any sort. Twenty years ago such an admixture was unheard of elsewhere, but in this camp it did not seem odd for black and white children to work together, live together, occupy the same cabins, and be cared for by both white and Negro counsellors. Those among the staff who were white did not think it odd either that some of the important administrative posts should be held by Negroes.

Years of successful camping, with great improvement in attitudes and behavior of the school children who attended, persuaded Mrs. Johanna Lindlof, then member of the New York City Board of Education, to send successive groups of colored children to Pioneer Youth. She knew they would here experience the dignity of being treated as first-class citizens.

Pioneer Youth is not a rich organization. It cannot afford a staff of secretaries to record its achievements. But the many young men and women who have learned understanding of good citizenship in its camp, summer after summer, are a living testimony—proof that the idealism of the founders was the finest realism.

Camp directors, other than those of Pioneer Youth, began to see the value of work as part of the summer schedule. The Quakers developed a unique kind of work experience for their young people. Some years ago they experimented by sending some to regions in the South where they could be useful. Here many farms were falling to pieces because their

## YOUTH CRUSADES FOR A BETTER DEMOCRACY

owners or tenants lacked the means with which to repair them. The Friends picked their sturdiest youths from colleges and from the outside and sent them to work in a heat they had never before guessed at. Yet before the summer was over, barns had been rebuilt, fence posts put into place, and land cleared for recreational and other purposes. Whatever needed to be done was done with an enthusiasm and joy that immediately promised a continuation of the venture in the years to come. Other young people have joined them now in the Work Camps, members of other religious denominations, all of whom have learned to serve without ostentation, and with a simplicity that cannot hurt the natural pride of those who are their beneficiaries.

The Forerunners, young people's auxiliary of the Fellowship of Reconciliation, are a Pacifist group, who in the midst of war keep to the faith that love must be included in the democratic philosophy, else there can be no peace.

There are 325 groups of Forerunners scattered over the country, affiliated with similar ones in foreign lands. "You won't be the only ones putting kindness in place of hate," writes the parent organization. "There are thousands of them, and tens of thousands of them, and some day there will be millions and hundreds of millions. You will be part of a great movement, one of the men and women and young people who believe in the possibility of building a world of brotherhood. These men and women and young people are in every country in this world. They were organized in England during the very fury of the First World War."

These youths do not, as many assume, merely refuse to engage in war. Their program is to study present society, to seek the causes behind the hate and fear that dominate so much of our human experi-

ence. They work actively against the evils that bedevil us all, whether met in isolated experiences, in whole communities, or in government itself. They co-operate with liberal organizations everywhere to eliminate racial and religious discrimination. This is their pledge: "I agree to keep the faith in the ideal of world brotherhood, and to explore its meaning in relation to peace, race relations, personal conduct . . . to commit myself with others to search out the things that prevent world brotherhood, and to try to discover principles to which I can commit myself in the building of a free world."

Forerunners have been prominent in their protest against our treatment of the Nisei; they have sent pleas from many schools throughout the country asking that the President feed the starving children of Europe; they have struck in schools in protest against anti-Semitism; they work ardently for the rights of the Negro.

One of the secretaries of the organization one day waited in line with other passengers in a train to get into the dining car. Before them passed a line of American soldiers with their German prisoners of war. Enraged that she should have to defer to a group of Nazis, a woman slapped one of them as he passed. The other passengers looked at her with shocked astonishment, but the young man asked permission to speak to the prisoners. Although this was refused, he was allowed to sit with them. Softly, after a few moments, he sang a couple of German folk songs. Then he got up and left the car, but not before the German prisoner whose face had been slapped gripped his hand in silent gratitude.

Not a world shaking event this. It does not make much sound in the noisy pool that is the world. But the spirit behind it, could it be multiplied enough, would heighten the dignity of human life.

## COMMON GROUND

To heighten the dignity of human life is in essence what all youth groups are seeking. Beside those mentioned are many others: the Catholic Interracial Council, the CORE groups, the Y's all over the country, Jewish organizations, and others whom there is no space to mention.

Theirs is not a mass movement as it was in Hitler's Germany or Mussolini's Italy, but it is a movement individual and diverse as America is diverse; sometimes brash and aggressive, sometimes

modest and unassuming, both headlong and cautious, superficial and profound. Yet at the core there is the deep unity of courage, idealism, and faith in the democracy of America and in their ability to make it better.

---

Sara Bloch is a free-lance writer who has contributed to *The National Geographic*, *Child Study*, *The Journal of the National Education Association*, and other magazines.

## THE MEN OF THE MERCHANT MARINE

On all the seven seas, the heroic men of the Merchant Marine have pushed through troops and supplies toward ultimate victory for the United Nations. Those pictured here are citizens of the United States, either native-born or naturalized, with long voyages behind them under which they were bombed repeatedly—on the Russian run, the Mediterranean, South Africa, the North Atlantic, Pearl Harbor.

The pictures were taken at the rest center for merchant seamen in Oyster Bay, Long Island. This is one of seven rest centers operated in this country by the United Seamen's Service, for men suffering from enemy action and those in need of rest after long voyages at sea under wartime conditions. The United Seamen's Service also operates residence and recreation clubs in our principal ports and overseas. The organization was founded in September of 1942 by the War Shipping Administration, ship owners, builders and operators, the maritime unions, and several influential public-spirited citizens. In 1943 the USS became a member of the National War Fund and now receives its entire support through the Fund.

The pictures are the work of Marie H. Baldwin of Oyster Bay, volunteer recreation director of the Home. Mrs. Baldwin has done photography as a hobby since 1934. She does all her own work, has written articles for a few photography magazines, and has exhibited in international salons for four years—"in a minor way," she says. "I take my photography lightly and for fun. These pictures were taken only with the idea of having them in a book in the Home and for the men to send to their homes. I take them just before luncheon and the men straggle in. I get two men to hold two reflectors that I use, and we just snap one picture of each man. It couldn't be simpler. There is no fancy equipment, and it takes me about one second to plug the two lamps in. I use a blank wall in the hall, and the men are passing continually back and forth, and I do my best to grab the pictures in between. I take the men just as they come."

Selections from her Merchant Marine collection are available for loan exhibitions to museums, libraries, schools, etc. Arrangements should be made directly through her. Address: Mrs. James C. Baldwin, Oyster Bay, Long Island.

## THE "FOREIGN-BORN VOTE"

YAROSLAV J. CHYZ

EVER since the Civil War the spectre of the so-called "foreign-born vote" has appeared before Presidential elections. Many politicians, newspapermen, and commentators assume that several million American workers, farmers, housewives, professional and business men, because they are of foreign birth or descent, make up their minds how to vote in a way different from that of other American citizens. Some of these politicians and commentators talk as if naturalized citizens and their descendants ignore entirely the interests of the United States, their own stake in it included, and are guided in their vote primarily by loyalties and considerations connected with their country of origin.

Very often the talk about the "foreign-born vote" is accompanied by exaggerated claims by self-styled group leaders—who are frequently political job-seekers—that they control thousands or even millions of votes and can deliver them to either party—claims which often exceed the voting strength of the group in the particular community, district, or state. Contentions such as "the next President of the United States may be elected by the vote of the foreign-born" make good copy but do not bear analysis. No nationality or racial group votes as a unit. In a close election any group of voters whose number exceeds the plurality of the winning candidate can claim to have the balance of power, whether the group in question is native or foreign-born, belongs to the

same organization, or lives in the same community.

According to the 1940 Census there were in the United States 7,159,643 naturalized citizens of voting age as compared with 72,703,808 native Americans over 21, or some 9 per cent of the total potential electorate of the country. In the four fiscal years since the 1940 Census, 1,302,074 aliens have been naturalized, but this increase has been partly offset by deaths and departures. Thus for this election there are between  $7\frac{1}{2}$  and 8 million potential voters of foreign birth.

This body of voters is divided into some forty nationality groups, each subdivided in various parties and factions. They are scattered in smaller or larger colonies throughout all of the 48 states. They are bound to the places where they live by years of work, by the real estate they own, by social and family ties, and by the future of their children. Most of them are workers and belong to trade unions. They take part in local, county, and state politics and are vitally interested in labor laws, taxes, prices, farm subsidies, rationing, and the education of their sons and daughters. Even if they still talk their native languages and keep some of their inherited customs, they live an American life, and most of them by now—partly a result of the war—are as deeply conscious of their Americanism as are the Sons or Daughters of the American Revolution.

This is still truer of their children and



## COMMON GROUND

descendants. Of the 72,703,808 potential native-born voters shown by the 1940 Census, some 17½ million—exact figures are not available—have foreign-born parents or had some language other than English as their mother tongue. But they have spent their entire lives in this country, have gone to American schools, and their political thinking is grounded in America.

Still, many of the first and even some of our second-generation voters are interested in the fate of their countries of origin. Because some of these countries are now in the limelight of international controversies and the center of post-war planning, their interest is keener than it would be otherwise. It is reflected in the discussions of their group press and in the activities of their organizations. These discussions and activities are pointed out by those who charge that the vote of these groups will be dominated by old-country interests or that they are “un-American,” “dangerous,” or “subversive.”

Actually this concern of Americans of recent foreign descent for the fate of the country where their ancestors lie buried or where their brothers now live is both natural and legitimate. In general it detracts no more from their Americanism than a deep interest and concern for the future of China, India, or the British Empire makes an American of Mayflower ancestry un-American. Old-stock Americans championing freedom for India or Ireland, Jewish Americans anxious about the fate of Palestine, Italian immigrants troubled about the future of Italy—all have a right to include these concerns in that set of ideas and convictions on which they will base their vote in November. No doubt there will be individuals who will base their vote on a single issue of foreign policy. These will probably be few, and there is no reason to believe that the proportion of such in-

dividuals will be appreciably greater in the so-called nationality groups than among the general mass of voters.

Even a superficial perusal of the foreign-language press in this country up to the first of August shows that the stands taken in three previous Presidential years still prevail, that the old-country issues raised by the war have not changed earlier political alignments. These papers voice criticism or approval of various acts of the Administration, express wishes and demands regarding policies, both domestic and foreign; but so far no important change of stands is noticeable. This means more than a similar observation regarding the English-language press could possibly mean, for the foreign-language press is much closer to its readers and reflects their opinions more accurately than the general American press.

Of course it must be remembered that a considerable part of the foreign-language press does not, as a matter of policy, take a definite partisan stand in elections. Many newspapers are published by large fraternal associations which have members belonging to all parties. Many newspapers are the only publications in their language in their communities and hence must serve readers of varying political convictions. The policy of such newspapers tends to be non-partisan; they limit themselves to reporting the progress of the campaign and discussing the issues involved. A minority of the foreign-language press, however, has a more or less definite partisan stand. So far not more than one or two of the papers which have taken political stands in the past have switched from Democrat to Republican or vice versa. This does not apply to some 20 odd papers—out of our 1,100 foreign-language publications—which in former campaigns supported the Communist candidate, since this party has been officially dissolved.



## THE "FOREIGN-BORN VOTE"

In articles and editorials so far published by the leading papers taking sides in the election, no old-country problem has been made an election issue, with the exception of some pro-Soviet papers, which stress the friendship of certain candidates toward the Soviet Union and attack others because of their alleged enmity or indifference toward Russia. But even these papers claim that friendly relations with Russia are essential to the future welfare of the United States. In general such questions as post-war jobs, taxation, social security, and the respective abilities of the candidates have been discussed. This is indicative of the attitude of foreign-born voters. They will mark their ballots according to their views on domestic quite as much as foreign issues. Their votes will be determined by their reactions to a wide variety of local, state, and national problems, not by what they think is the best interests of some land abroad.

Still, the problems of their countries of origin will undoubtedly play a serious role in the minds of many foreign-origin voters in the coming elections. They feel a sense of moral obligation toward the country of their fathers, an obligation to try to obtain for it the fullest consideration and the best possible conditions in the coming peace. Americans of recent foreign descent want the American public and the American government to understand the issues involved. This desire for understanding is particularly strong as they read and hear startling proposals and glaring misstatements about their countries of origin put forward either by well-meaning but ignorant amateur "specialists" or by malicious propagandists opposed to what they consider right and just.

No responsible leaders, editors, or politicians in American nationality groups advocate that the United States sacrifice

its own interests for the welfare of their former homeland. Many of them believe, however, that their plan for their country of origin is also in the best interest of the United States. Still, there is no evidence that any group would despair if their plan did not get the support they would like to have from this country. Their main concern seems to be an anxiety to make their views known to those who will shape the future peace.

This anxiety to "present their case to America" and so fulfill their moral obligation to their kinsmen abroad is sometimes an object of exploitation from two sides. In some cases European politicians try to buttress their activities in the United States by securing the help of their nationality group. Usually they get a lot of publicity, but their actual influence upon the masses of their kinsmen here is slight: they are listened to politely, applauded loudly at mass meetings, given space in the press, but pretty well ignored when it comes to any action, voting included. The other kind of exploitation comes from rival American party politicians, who bid for votes by expressing sympathy for the aspirations of a group, fostering its ambitions, lauding its heroes, or giving vague promises that some action will be taken by their party. Foreign-born Americans are used to being made much of before election and forgotten afterward. On the basis of past experience, it seems safe to say that such political tactics are overrated, though the commotion caused by such discussions, demands, threats, and promises may sometimes have looked formidable.

Even this commotion and the tensions and anxieties created by it could in large degree be avoided if the different factions or schools of thought within each of our nationality groups—most of which have different proposals for the future of their countries of origin—had some semi-offi-

## COMMON GROUND

cial agency, government department, or Congressional committee before which they could present their case, file their suggestions, criticize or oppose the proposals of their adversaries, and be assured that their own views would be given serious consideration. It is sometimes their fear that they will not be heard or listened to, more than anything else, that makes groups jittery and susceptible to the agitation of persons wanting to capitalize on their sentiments at election time. Senate and House Committees on Foreign Affairs during the last war served as bodies before which the groups presented their questions and demands. The Division of Work Among the Foreign-Born, under Miss Josephine Roche, in George Creel's Committee on Public Information, also performed a very important function in this respect at that time.

Some similar agency could do an important and effective job now. It would tend to take the old-country problem out of current politics and would provide even the most hot-headed and unreasonable partisans of certain views and theories with a forum before which they could present their case. After all, the foreign policy of the United States is the policy of the people of the United States, and all of them should be provided with legitimate channels through which to make known their views and through which they will be assured that no one is "putting anything over" on them. They should feel that their ideas are given fair consideration and that, if rejected, it is

not because of intrigue or political manipulation, but because the interest of the majority of the population demands a different course.

Such an agency would give our nationality groups the assurance that the coming election is not their only opportunity to be heard and does not mean a final decision on their proposals. It would thus even further reduce the influence of electioneering agitation, either from inside or outside their group, which tries to exploit their understandable and natural sympathy for the lands of their ancestors and to capitalize on their legitimate, though sometimes overemphasized, interest in certain issues of foreign policy. There is good reason to believe that in unburdening themselves before such an agency, many of the groups and their leaders would make sound suggestions and valuable proposals by which the whole United States would profit.

American casualty lists, the large part the foreign-born have played in our production lines, their more than generous purchase of war bonds, and staunch support of the war effort are guarantee that in interceding for their countries of origin as well as in voting in November, they will not forget they are Americans.

---

Yaroslav J. Chyz is manager of the Foreign-Language Press Division of the Common Council for American Unity and author of another article, "The War and the Foreign-Language Press" in our Spring 1943 issue.

## THE DECISION

OWEN DODSON

Who are these among you  
Homesick for home and longing for peace:  
The summer going and the war going  
And all the sharp promises of peace?

Watch from your foxholes  
For fire on distant mountains,  
Fire flags lit with peace  
Waving from the mountains.

There are other journeys you must make  
After you journey home, other journeys you must make alone  
Into the countries of the heart  
To sit with silence and decide alone

If your final home will be  
Where brother knows brother,  
Chews meat, breaks bread  
Together with his brother;

Or where a man will trample again  
His neighbor, shake no hands,  
Scorn fellowship, light fires  
Of dark bones and flesh to warm his hands.

Who are these among you  
Longing for peace among all men,  
Longing for each homesick heart  
To make a pilgrimage among all men?

Owen Dodson appeared in our Winter 1944 issue with "Black Mother Praying in the Summer 1943."

# THE GRANDEUR AND MISERY

LEON Z. SURMELIAN

AFTER many goodbyes, the great day of my departure arrived. I wore a new suit, the cheapest I could find in a Turkish booth in the Grand Bazaar of Stambul, where prices were lower than in Pera and Galata. Unfortunately, it was not cut in the smart American style, and I suspected it was made of an army blanket, but my new shoes were brown oxfords with pointed toe-ends, like the Americans wore. The trouble was they squeaked like the wheels of an ox cart, and I had to walk carefully. I shaved myself for the first time, being almost seventeen, with an American safety razor, brushed my teeth with an American toothpaste—having already begun to Americanize myself. I carried all my worldly belongings in a valise of imitation leather; a few French and Armenian books, my mother's ring, our family photograph, an extra shirt, and some clean underwear. I had in my pocket \$29.00 in American money, \$4.00 more than the minimum required by immigration laws.

My brother and a few schoolmates went to the harbor to see me off. The ship on which I was sailing was owned by a Greek company but flew the American flag. My heart was heavy now, and tears blurred my eyes as we embraced at the foot of the gangplank. Alone on deck, I felt I was off on the supreme adventure of my life. I began to experience the panic of being uprooted from one's own world. I felt as if I were leaving myself behind and it was another person, not I, going to America. There is a feeling akin to the agony of

death in long voyages to foreign lands. I thought: perhaps it is necessary to die in order to be born again.

Faster ships covered the distance between Istanbul and New York in two weeks, but it was only on the twenty-fourth day that seagulls came to fly around our ship and I saw a long, low strip of mysterious land stretching out over the horizon—America! The breeze was the breath of the New World, mild and sweet on that first day of September. Everybody rushed to the deck. A few women crossed themselves, but few spoke, the occasion being too solemn. The attention of all was riveted on that strip of land in the distance.

Sailing boats flying the American flag scudded past us, different from our lateen-rigged boats, but with a gay reckless beauty of their own. Watching them, I experienced a sensation of aerial lightness—as if I could fly forever like some deathless bird of the sea, relieved of all human cares and worries.

New York emerged from the now tawny waters of the Atlantic with the soaring towers of its cosmic crystal cubes—immense geometric shapes of silver-gray, high as mountains of mathematical precision. Could it be possible these were buildings? I gazed with frenzied interest at the spectacle of the New World, the Statue of Liberty symbolizing its spirit.

The smoke that rose from these skyscrapers made New York look like a 20th century Nineveh or Babylon on fire. What

## THE GRANDEUR AND MISERY

imperious battle-march of industry! America was marching before us with banners and guidons of smoke flying. Puny, mortal man, so insignificant in the elemental vastness of the ocean, had created this titanic miracle on land. Come, I wanted to cry, gather, all ye gods of Greece and Rome, Egypt and Babylon, and behold what man hath created here, the man of the old world on the soil of the new. As I came face to face with the overwhelming reality of America, Europe paled into insignificance, faded away, became almost like an historic myth.

It seemed that all the ships of the globe had gathered in the harbor of New York. All the nations had come to lay at the feet of the Statue of Liberty their products and their people in a universal pageant of homage. And above all this Lilliputian confusion and activity, all this busy festival of human pigmies, marched the proud New World through epic skies with smoke banners flying.

Our ship stopped with a loud rattle of

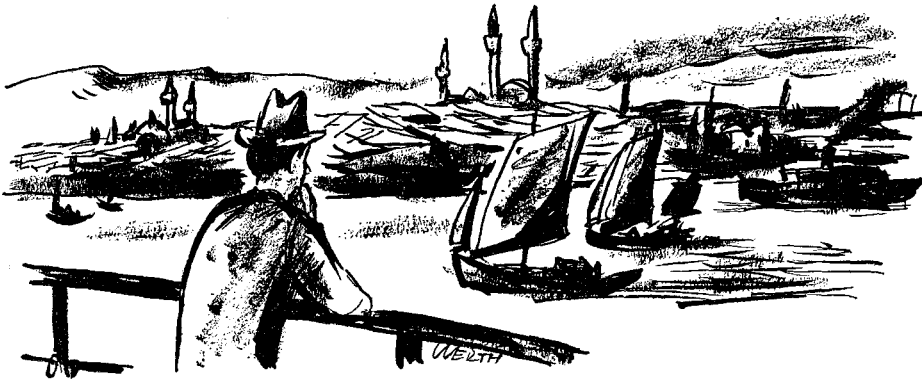
We went ashore with our belongings. The first and second class passengers were allowed to go, after clearing the customs, unless there was something wrong with their papers, but those of us who had come third and "fourth" class were segregated and kept under guard. We were, apparently, the undesirable ones, even though I was a student.

"They will send us to Ellis Island," an Armenian said.

"Because they found a louse on a fourth class bum," said another man, which caused general laughter in our group.

"Proletarians of all countries with lice, unite!"

The guards ordered us into a launch. We were a motley crowd of Greeks, Albanians, Jews, Hungarians, Rumanians, Yugoslavs, Czechoslovaks, Russians, Armenians, and there was even a Turk among us. All of us were bewildered and worried as we were taken to Ellis Island, where I had to declare again that I did not believe in polygamy, anarchy, in over-



its anchor chain. A tender drew alongside her, and immigration and quarantine officers came aboard. The passengers lined up on deck to show their papers. After this inspection was over, our ship was allowed to proceed and docked in the harbor proper—a thick jungle of ships.

throwing organized government by force; that I had never been an inmate in an insane asylum, imprisoned for a crime, and nobody in America had promised me employment.

I showed my letter of admission from the vice-president of the great American

## COMMON GROUND

college in Kansas where I was going to study agriculture.

Colored papers were pinned on our coats, and we were carefully examined by red-faced American doctors.

"They are still after that louse," one of us cracked again. "They won't let us free until they find it."

In the dining hall the eyes of many popped out as they saw the food—meat, butter, potatoes, bread, milk, coffee, prunes. There was a separate section for Orthodox Jews. We ate with paper forks and spoons, from paper plates, and drank the milk and coffee from paper cups. It was all very sanitary, but the food also tasted like paper. Some insisted the butter and meat were synthetic, chemically produced by machines, which I myself was inclined to believe.

We stared curiously at the Negro employees of Ellis Island, marveling at the progress the African blacks had made in America—speaking English, wearing clothes and horn-rimmed glasses like other Americans. At night, a giant mulatto with long swinging arms and an organ-like voice handed us our fumigated blankets.

Another Negro with horn-rimmed glasses announced the names of those who were to be admitted. He was very popular. Every time we saw him we flocked around him, each wondering if his name was in the new list he held in his hand. We called him "Baggage." He always said "Baggage!" after reading off a name.

I did not know why I was being detained at Ellis Island. The steamship company had spelled my name wrong, which perhaps was the reason. After I had fretted and worried for a month, my case was straightened out, thanks apparently to the efforts of the Armenian secretary of the New York YMCA, and "Baggage" at last called out my name. With a feeling of glorious freedom I got off the ferry-boat and set foot in New York City.

"Now remember," I said to myself, "you are actually in America. This is New York. Forward march!" I marched a few blocks, feeling a realized dream under my feet.

Getting on a street car, I managed to reach the office of the Armenian secretary in the YMCA, a Protestant minister, and a hustler. He told me the patriotic rug merchant in New York, to whom the director of my school in Istanbul had recommended me as one deserving of his support, would pay for my railroad fare to Kansas, but had declined to undertake the cost of my education in America. He was already supporting seven Armenian students in American colleges and was dissatisfied with them. They had turned out to be "Communists," and were so extravagant they wore ten dollar hats while he himself wore only a five dollar hat. I laughed. I wanted to meet him, but he seemed inaccessible to favor-seekers like myself, and the secretary advised me to stay away from his store, which I understood was a great establishment with many American employees.

I was disappointed. I had expected to get five hundred dollars a year from him, the sum he was paying to the other students. But it did not matter. I felt that from now on the world belonged to me.

I spent a sleepless night in a cheap hotel, paying one dollar for my bed. Trains and trucks trundled along all night, and the noise was so awful I wondered how people could ever sleep in New York.

By next morning I had sufficiently calmed down really to see New York and get the feel of America. The policemen directing traffic on horseback, the drug-stores, the cornucopian groceries, clothing stores, the Negro postman with the morning mail in his leather bag, the vending machines for cigarettes, apples, oranges, chewing-gum, the newsstands—all these were objects of much interest. And New York was a friendly town; its citizens were



## THE GRANDEUR AND MISERY

human, and not like creatures on Mars, as they might have been. I had not seen elevated trains and skyscrapers before, nor newspapers with sixty or a hundred pages—but otherwise there was nothing particularly strange or startling to me. Istanbul had a subway, the Galata Bridge was long too and sections of it could be opened for the passage of steamers, the ferryboats on the Bosphorus were just about as fast and comfortable as those in New York. From the inside, the city lost much of its fantastic other-world quality, became quite familiar. And it was that very familiarity that bound me to it immediately, made me want to live there. I now wished I did not have to go to Kansas; the very thought of going filled me with a vague dread. I imagined Kansas a sparsely populated agricultural region, with a few small settlements here and there, Kansas City the only one of its towns large enough to be marked on a French map of the United States I had consulted in Istanbul.

My ticket was ready and my train was leaving for Kansas at two in the afternoon. Now, I felt, the real adventure begins! I reminded myself I was a “soldier” and had to be brave. I bought cheese and ham sandwiches, individually wrapped, to eat on the train. I also fulfilled a childhood wish and bought a large one-pound bar of chocolate—for which I was prepared to pay at least a dollar, but the price was only twenty-five cents.

I managed to get by with a few words like how much, thank you, yes, sir, no, sir, please give me, I wish to go to—and the most useful phrase of all, from a Berlitz manual—What is this? By asking that question I learned the names of many articles when I made a purchase.

I rode to the railroad station in a taxi—feeling like a millionaire. The station was a cathedral-like building of such colossal proportions that just glancing up at its

ceiling made me dizzy. There was something of the music of the spheres about the air here: the station vibrated with a cosmic drone. I felt like a human ant in it, crawling along with thousands of other human ants, and all of us insignificant and absurd. This was a place for God to set up His throne, close to the skyey ceiling, in that music, with angels flying at His feet. And to think that this was nothing but a railroad station! Well, in America industry, after all, is God, I reflected, catching my breath. This great temple is dedicated to that divinity. How strange that Americans should be Christians—and how fortunate! Christ seemed out of place in the New World.

I was wandering in the vast spaces of this station, when a Negro porter came up and reached for my suitcase.

“Carry yo’ bag, suh?”

“Please, thank you,” I said, giving it to him, though I had to count my pennies and would have preferred to carry it myself. “I wish to go to Manhattan, Kansas.”

“Kansas? Yassuh. This way.” I gratefully followed him to my train and sat in a day coach next to a window. I admired the quiet behavior of the people as they came in with their bags. They took their time; there was plenty of room for everybody. The train started on schedule, and for an hour or so I could see nothing but tracks and cars gliding by.

A man in a white coat and cap walked through the car, carrying a basket loaded with food and drinks. “Get your peanuts, now, folks, nice, freshly salted peanuts,” he said in an intimate, persuasive voice. I bought a bag of peanuts, and drank my first bottle of Coca-Cola, which I had seen advertised everywhere. A novel American drink, of a peculiar taste, which made me feel more American.

At Albany I bought a paper and discovered the comic strips. But those odd drawings, with words coming out of the

## COMMON GROUND

mouths of the characters like elongated bubbles, puzzled me. They were, I perceived, intended to be humorous, but I had seen nothing like them before, and after faithfully translating some of the bubble words with the aid of my pocket dictionary—many others were not in it—I was still mystified by them.

I changed trains in Chicago and Kansas City, and after two anxious days, always fearing I had missed my station, arrived in Manhattan, Kansas, a nice, peaceful place—strangely silent after the noise of New York.

The campus of the college was on an elevation at the edge of the town. So palatial were its white limestone buildings—I counted some fifteen of them—that I was awed. The nerve of me to come to an institution like this with, now, only seventeen dollars in my pocket! In a field, student cadets, rifles on their shoulders, were drilling like a battalion of real soldiers while a band played. I had never thought of American youth as martially inclined. On another lawn young ladies in white turtle neck sweaters were practicing archery, and other girls playing baseball, croquet, tennis. What comedy was this I was playing! How could I expect to associate with these mature, aristocratic students?

The taxi deposited me at the gate of the ivy-clad Administration Building. With my battered valise and squeaking shoes, I went in to find the office of the vice-president, when bells began buzzing from all sides and the long corridor was filled with a torrent of gay, carefree youth. It flowed in from one end and flowed out the other, the main stream augmented by tributaries cascading down two stairways. It carried me along with it for a while, until I found a passage into which to retreat. I had expected to see only a few girl students, but there were thousands of them here—sophisticated young ladies,

looking like millionaires' daughters. The prospect of sitting with them in the same classrooms was disconcerting. I noticed the athletes, the campus lions, wearing white sweaters with a big purple "K." There were also women athletes, Amazonian females, similarly attired. They all glowed with health and animal vitality; they all seemed so happy, like grown children who had never known sorrow, had never suffered, gone hungry. What a Utopia of youth!

When the corridor was clear again, I composed myself, gathered enough courage to ask a passing student where the vice-president's office was, by showing his letter. He led me to his door.

The vice-president, a dark man with graying mustaches, European in appearance, rose from his desk and shook my hand. At first I pretended to understand what he said, for how could I be admitted to college without speaking English? But I soon gave myself away, being unable to answer his questions.

"*Sprechen Sie deutsch?*" he asked me.

I shook my head. "*Mais je parle un peu français.*"

He called the professor of French, and our linguistic troubles were over. This man had taught in Robert College and also knew Turkish. I had to tell the whole depressing truth—that I had no money, no friends in America. Could they give me work? I would do anything. I told them how much chemistry, geometry, botany, zoology, anatomy, and physiology I knew.

The vice-president looked as if he had a big problem on his hands. He explained that the college did employ a number of students, and he would have been glad to recommend me for a job, but I was three weeks late and all the positions on the campus had been filled.

He took me around and introduced me to my dean, the registrar, and various

## THE GRANDEUR AND MISERY

other officials and, after helping me fill out the registration blanks, turned me over to the secretary of the college YMCA who was also men's adviser and assistant football coach. This gentleman took me to a pep meeting and made a little speech about me, which I could not understand. There were other brief speeches, and much rhythmic yelling, led by two dynamic cheer leaders who jumped up together, bent now to the left and now to the right, went through some amazing contortions, as the room shook with explosive roars. These official cabalistic yells were in the student handbook, a copy of which was given me.

Jay Rah, Gee Haw,  
Jayhawk Saw.  
At 'em, eat 'em,  
Raw, Raw, Raw!

It was great stuff. This is what student life should be, I thought. And that night, from my room in the YMCA, I watched a football rally and bonfire. But much as I yearned to join the students in this celebration, and cut up with them, I remained dignified and aloof, being an outsider.

I liked my room; it was ideal for a student. I had paid a week's rent in advance—but after that? I didn't want to think of it. I wrote enthusiastically to my brother and companions in Istanbul of my first impressions and experiences in America, without mentioning my worries, and started a diary. My room was a vantage point for my future conquests. I would start from here—had already started. Forward march!

The following week I had to move down to an unused damp room in the basement, sweep the hallways in the YMCA, and do other menial tasks about the building—my forced cheerfulness hiding my shame and humiliation. But I said to myself: all this is good for my soul.

For several days, until I got a job in a downtown restaurant where fortunately six other students also worked, including two football stars, I lived on bread, cheese, and water.

After the novelty and initial glamor of this college town wore off, I became des-



perately lonely. Not so much because I was cut off from my people and friends, but because I did not meet a genuinely intellectual American student, one who wanted to devote himself to the welfare of his country or humanity, and was interested in more than getting "credits" for a degree. These young Americans had bright minds, were keen in laboratory work, and wonderfully healthy. They were free from those mean traits so common in the youth of other countries. There was a certain large, spacious quality about

the American character. But culturally and spiritually they were far behind my companions in the old world. A single American comrade would have made me happy, in spite of all the difficulties with which I had to contend. As it was, I sought intellectual companionship only among faculty members.

I was very busy, always on the go, caught in the perpetual motion of American life. Translating Emerson was my main comfort. He expressed many of my own sentiments and ideas. Emerson's America was much closer to my heart; I loved it. I was sure I would have felt perfectly at home in old New England.

Sundays were the hardest. On Sundays I could have battered my head against the walls of my room, gone mad with loneliness. Anything from Europe, such as French magazines in the college library, which apparently no one besides myself read, caused an attack of acute nostalgia. I counted the days and the hours when I should receive a letter from Europe.

My brother was now studying music in Vienna and my two closest friends were in Paris. They too had their troubles and suffered disillusion. France was not the country we had thought, and loved. We had considered ourselves belonging to a backward little nation of the East, not knowing we were, in fact, the true Frenchmen, or Austrians, or Americans—ahead of our models in Christendom. They had lost what we preserved and cherished.

Now, for the first time, I felt really homeless. I sighed to myself when I saw American children playing before their homes and witnessed scenes of happy family life behind lighted windows at night, as I walked alone through the streets, sick with loneliness and memories. One evening, returning from my work in the restaurant, whose proprietress, a severe

taskmaster, haunted me in my dreams like a witch, I paused before a house, and listened, enchanted, to the music of a piano. It was played hesitantly, by a young girl practicing her lesson, I thought—as girls in our street in Trebizond used to do. Those familiar repetitious notes were infinitely sweet and perfect to me. When the piano stopped, the magic was gone. I blessed its player in my heart and lingered before that house, hoping the young girl I imagined would come out, and I would see her and thank her. I had the feeling she would recognize me, would remember we had played hopscotch and skipped rope together—in a dream world long ago. Yes, we knew each other very well, though we had never met, and she was American and I was Armenian.

I walked on to my room, for another solitary night, for another gruesome night of exile and gloom.

All that winter I could neither laugh nor smile, and would have fled back to Europe, or at least to New York or Boston, so much closer to Europe, if I could, or had not been ashamed.

But I did not wish to acknowledge my defeat. No, I was not defeated. Forward march, forever! What I sought in America was there, somewhere—I would find it. The children I passed by but never spoke to in the streets, and the recurrent music of that piano, gave me courage, allayed in some measure my great hunger and longing. We were alike. Remembering my thoughts aboard ship, I said to myself: *I am dying—but I will be born again.*

---

*Leon Surmelian is well known to CG readers. This is a chapter from his book which E. P. Dutton will publish early in 1945 with an introduction by William Saroyan.*

*Kurt Werth is the illustrator.*

# THE BALLAD OF OLEANA

THEODORE C. BLEGEN

AN interesting aspect of the Norwegian emigrant songs and ballads of the 19th century is the faithfulness with which they reflect special trends and episodes in the saga of emigration. They tell of the adventures of immigrants who sought fortunes in the gold mines of the West, the reactions of participants in Norway's labor movement of the 1850s, and the story of the paternalistic colony established by the world-renowned violinist, Ole Bull, in Pennsylvania.

The idealistic Ole Bull stunned his countrymen when in 1852 he bought, or thought he bought, 120,000 acres of land in Potter County, Pennsylvania; projected the colony of New Norway, centered about the town of Oleana; invited settlers; and busied himself with a dozen magnificent schemes.

There was a burst of songs and ballads in Norway about this marvelous development. Jubilant songs they were:

Come, hail the Music Master,  
Hurrah for Ole Bull!  
To cheats he's brought disaster,  
Their cup of woe is full.  
New Norway he is founding,  
A gift to every man,  
So come, your shouts resounding,  
With freedom in the van.

And they praised Ole Bull as a friend of the working man:

Good men of Norway, strong of arm,  
If fortune's barbs have torn you,

Behold a friend whose heart is warm,  
A man who will not scorn you.  
Better he than gold or fame!  
Ole Bull—yes, that's his name.  
He knows that here are grief and pain,  
Your burdens he would lighten.  
Freedom, bread—these you will gain,  
Your future he will brighten.  
Better he than gold or fame!  
You know him—Ole Bull's his name!

Alas, Oleana, as the colony was popularly called, failed. The violinist had fallen into the hands of land speculators. Cheats had brought disaster to him, not he to them. The colonists were disillusioned, and the grand scheme went to pieces.

Precisely at the climax, in 1853, the rollicking ballad of *Oleana* appeared—a satirical song sung for more than two generations on both sides of the Atlantic.

*Oleana* was written by Ditmar Meidell, the editor of the Norwegian comic journal *Krydseren*, and first appeared in that paper on March 5, 1853. (For a full account of the song, the original words, and a prose translation, see *Norwegian Emigrant Songs and Ballads* by Theodore C. Blegen and Martin B. Ruud, University of Minnesota Press, 1936, pages 187 to 198. Ed.)

It is a somewhat surprising fact that this ballad, one of the most interesting examples of its kind in the literature of American immigration, has not hitherto been translated into verse. I have tried here to turn the ballad into an English translation that can be sung. Though admittedly free,

## COMMON GROUND

it is, I think, faithful in spirit to the original, and it tries to recapture something of the exuberance with which Meidell delighted thousands of his countrymen.

### OLEANA

*I'm off to Oleana, I'm turning from my doorway,  
No chains for me, I'll say goodbye to slavery in Norway.*

*Ole—Ole—Ole—oh! Oleana!  
Ole—Ole—Ole—oh! Oleana!*

### II

*They give you land for nothing in jolly Oleana,  
And grain comes leaping from the ground in floods of golden manna.*

### III

*The grain it does the threshing, it pours into the sack, Sir,  
And so you take a quiet nap a-stretching on your back, Sir.*

### IV

*The crops they are gigantic, potatoes are immense, Sir,  
You make a quart of whiskey from each one without expense, Sir.*

### V

*And ale as strong and sweet as the best you've ever tasted,  
It's running in the foamy creek, where most of it is wasted.*

### VI

*The salmon they are playing, and leaping in the brook, Sir,  
They hop into your kettle, put the cover on, and cook, Sir.*

### VII

*And little roasted piggies, with manners quite demure, Sir,  
They ask you, "Will you have some ham?" And then you say, "Why, sure, Sir."*

### VIII

*The cows are most obliging, their milk they put in pails, Sir,  
They make your cheese and butter with a skill that never fails, Sir.*

### IX

*The bull he is the master, his calves he likes to boss, Sir,  
He beats them when they loaf about, he's never at a loss, Sir.*



# OLEANA

*Allegretto*

The musical score is written for a single melodic line and a bass line. The key signature has one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 2/4. The tempo is marked 'Allegretto'. The lyrics are in Norwegian and are written below the notes. The score consists of five systems of music.

I O - le - a - na der er det godt at  
væ - re, i Nor - ge vil jeg in - te Sla - ve -  
laen - ken bæ - re. O - le O - le -  
a - na, O - le O - le - a - na, O - le O - le  
O - le O - le O - le O - le - a - na.

From Norwegian Emigrant Songs and Ballads by Theodore C. Blegen and Martin B. Ruud, University of Minnesota Press, 1936. Reproduced by permission of the publishers.

## COMMON GROUND

### X

*The calves are very helpful, themselves they skin and kill, Sir,  
They turn into a tasty roast before you drink your fill, Sir.*

### XI

*The hens lay eggs colossal, so big and round and fine, Sir,  
The roosters act like eight-day clocks, they always tell the time, Sir.*

### XII

*And cakes come raining down, Sir, with chocolate frosting coated,  
They're nice and rich and sweet, good Lord, you eat them till you're bloated.*

### XIII

*And all night long the sun shines, it always keeps a-glowing,  
It gives you eyes just like a cat's to see where you are going.*

### XIV

*The moon is also beaming, it's always full, I vow, Sir,  
A bottle for a telescope, I'm looking at it now, Sir.*

### XV

*Two dollars for carousing they give each day, and more, Sir,  
For if you're good and lazy, they will even give you four, Sir.*

### XVI

*Support your wife and kids? Why the county pays for that, Sir,  
You'd slap officials down and out if they should leave you flat, Sir.*

### XVII

*And if you've any bastards, you're freed of their support, Sir,  
As you can guess since I am spinning verses for your sport, Sir.*

### XVIII

*You walk about in velvet, with silver buttons bright, Sir,  
You puff away at meerschaum pipes, your women pack them right, Sir.*

### XIX

*The dear old ladies struggle, and sweat for us, and labor,  
And if they're cross, they spank themselves, they do it as a favor.*

### XX

*And so we play the fiddle, and all of us are glad, Sir,  
We dance a merry polka, boys, and that is not so bad, Sir.*

## WHY WE CAME TO AMERICA: THE FINNS

### XXI

*I'm off to Oleana, to lead a life of pleasure,  
A beggar here, a count out there, with riches in full measure.*

### XXII

*I'm coming, Oleana, I've left my native doorway,  
I've made my choice, I've said goodbye to slavery in Norway.*

*Ole—Ole—Ole—oh! Oleana!  
Ole—Ole—Ole—oh! Oleana!*

Dean of the Graduate School of the University of Minnesota and author of *Norwegian Migration to America* and many other volumes, Theodore C. Blegen is now Director of the Historical Service Board in Washington, D.C., preparing discussion materials for G. I. Roundtables in the Army. This translation of *Oleana* is also being published by the Norwegian American Historical Association in its *Studies and Records*, volume 14.

## WHY WE CAME TO AMERICA: THE FINNS

JOHN I. KOLEHMAINEN

A SHORT yet meaningful entry was recorded by the secretary of the Cleveland *Rauhan Aatte* (Spirit of Peace) Temperance Society on the evening of March 24, 1907. It read: "The topic of our discourse was 'Why did we emigrate to America?' A lively discussion followed."

How, one irresistibly asks, was this pertinent and perennial question answered by the Finnish immigrants? Were they able to discover the forces compelling them to leave their archipelago-like fatherland of lakes and streams, forests of unyielding green and granite ridges? What, indeed, were the results of this earnest, if unsophisticated, inquiry into the motives of emigration?

The reply came a week later. It took the form of a painstakingly inscribed re-

port of a committee chosen to summarize the varied points of view expressed: "The reasons for emigration from Finland are fundamentally economic. The chief cause is the deplorable condition of the working classes, especially the hired help, who are forced to sell for a mere pittance their labor for a year at a time and who have to toil as long frequently as fifteen hours a day at hard work. So it is not surprising that there is a desire to seek one's fortune in a strange land.

"But there are also those who emigrate only to be 'with the others,' and some come to America to develop their political theories under the protection of a 'free country.'"

This summary embedded in musty manuscript undoubtedly fails to do justice

## COMMON GROUND

to the breadth and depth (and intensity) of the immigrants' search for the well-springs of migration. Yet, accepting their report at face value, how adequate an explanation was it? Did they, in truth, correctly assess the powerful persuasions bringing in all some three hundred thousand sons and daughters of Finland to the New World?

"The heart pleaded Stay, but the stomach commanded Go!" Yes, many Finns were led by economic considerations to quit the country of their birth. Influential economic factors acted, with particular effect in northern Finland (79 out of every 100 immigrants were recruited from the three northernmost provinces of Vaasa, Oulu, and Turu-Pori), to create a "will" to emigrate. Agriculture in general (85 out of every 100 immigrants were rural and agricultural in origin) was handicapped by a short growing season, the infertility of the soil, the constant threat of frost—even July was not immune—and a relaxation in the clearing of land because of the increasing importance of forestry.

The landed groups complained of the severity of taxes and their mounting indebtedness, yet not many of them felt free to leave Finland; they accounted for but 14.5 per cent of the total number of rural emigrants. Crowding into the overseas movement in far greater volume, however, were their offspring who (save the eldest in each family) saw in primogenitureship formidable obstacles to their advancement in the Old Country and who, furthermore, were ill-prepared psychologically to become mere hired help. Indeed, over half of the rural migrants came from the ranks of the progeny of landowning Finns.

The landless groups, on the other hand, felt keenly the pressure of low wages, substandard working and living conditions, and sensed the difficulties standing

in the path of their elevation to peasant proprietorship. Prince Kropotkin's visit to Finland left a discouraging impression on him. "What is the use of talking to this peasant about American machines," he wrote, "when he has barely enough bread to live upon from one crop to the next; when the rent which he has to pay for that boulder-clay grows heavier and heavier in proportion to his success in improving the soil? He gnaws at his hard-as-stone rye-flour cake which he bakes twice a year; he has with it a morsel of fearfully salted cod and a drink of skimmed milk. How dare I talk to him of American machines, when all that he can raise must be sold to pay rent and taxes?"

Frequently enough among the landless peasantry were heard the bitter words: "Neither my parents nor I have owned a single hectare of land; we have no fatherland!" Before them, too, loomed the spectre of famine. The terrible year of 1868 with its ghastly toll of life was still in vivid memory: one out of every thirteen dead; in one parish alone 23 per cent of the inhabitants falling victim; in the country as a whole a net decrease in population of over 100,000. Little wonder then that the landless elements in Finland contributed 34 out of every 100 emigrants.

Changes in the economy of northern Finland tended to stimulate emigration by creating a relative oversupply of labor power. The pitch-tar and shipbuilding industries declined rapidly while direct overseas shipping from the northern ports followed suit; general farming was giving way to dairying and forestry, both of which made less demands upon the labor market. The slowness with which the industrial revolution appeared in the region, as well as the failure to integrate the North with the economic life of the rest of Finland, were again accentuating factors.

"Fundamental," as the Clevelanders

## WHY WE CAME TO AMERICA: THE FINNS

had suggested, were these economic considerations. And, in contrast, how persuasive the appeal of the "Land of Gold" across the ocean with its apparently amazing wages and its limitless opportunities!

Yet there were other than economic forces contributing to the rise and spread of emigration. It is highly significant, for example, that its rapid growth coincided with the introduction in 1878 of compulsory military service. The inhabitants of northern Finland were too well familiar with battlegrounds and military service in behalf of non-Finnish interests (for the Swedes in the Thirty Years' War as an illustration) to welcome conscription; many sought by flight to evade it. The Finnish attitude became well-nigh revolutionary with the ever-increasing Russian violation of the spirit and the letter of the 1878 statute, culminating in the February Manifesto of 1899 and the Law of July 12, 1901, that provided for the integration of the Finnish army with the military forces of Russia. Evasion mushroomed and an increasing number of Finns were compelled to leave their homeland. Joining men of military age were numerous patriots and ardent nationalists who found life both unbearable and unsafe in the Russification Era and sought also to escape the "growing cruelty of a diseased and dying Russian empire."

There were yet other motives. Sometimes the decision to depart arose from family and marital difficulties: a tempestuous married life; the conflict of a young generation against parental authority; in-law situations productive of tensions and strains; hopelessly tangled love affairs. Again, perhaps, it was a bankrupt fleeing his creditors; a transgressor ignominiously fleeing the consequences of his sins; a law-breaker hoping to find refuge from the long arm of justice; or, more often, a wife and children joining a pioneering

husband and father, an aged grandmother seeking the warmth of a transplanted hearth. Difficult it was to refuse: in endless immigrant letters from America came not only encouraging summons but steamship tickets (nearly 16,000 in the three years 1905-1907) and funds to the amount of five million marks annually.

There was, finally, much in the make-up of the northern Finns that made them sensitive to the call of the land beyond the Atlantic. As so vividly described by Zacharias Topelius, Yrjö-Koskinen, J. Snellman, and many others, the *Pohjalaiset* were fearless, self-confident, resourceful; frugal, self-sufficient, practical; independent, the love of freedom in their blood, wanting no more of life than to be "unharassed and unobstructed." These Northerners, moreover, were migratory by tradition: they and their forebears for centuries having moved across desolate tundra to and from Sweden, Norway, and the shores of the Arctic. In the opinion of the Governor of Vaasa expressed in a message to the Senate in 1895, it was these traits that had been primarily responsible for the emigration of his people. And, of course, it was these qualities that fitted the Finnish immigrants for life in a free and democratic and pioneering America.

Such, then, were the reasons why the Finns came to America. And, no doubt, these selfsame forces have worked their wonders in other lands to the end that Pole and Jew, Italian and Swede, Finn and the host of other peoples, might create a truly New World of Human Brotherhood.

---

*John I. Kolehmainen is on the faculty of Heidelberg College in Ohio. He is the author of a previous article in our pages on the early hand-written Finnish-language newspapers in this country, Autumn 1943.*

## THE HEART'S TONGUE

JEWEL DRICKAMER

WHEN Nicholas Lavrakas came to this country from Greece, he knew only one person here, a bachelor cousin who lived in a mill town in Massachusetts. After getting through the Ellis Island formalities, he made his way to New England by showing a paper with the cousin's address printed on it. He knew only the smallest English—"yes" and "no."

In time, he arrived at the cousin's. George Manelos was glad to see him. He fixed him a cot in his own room, then got him a job at one of the mills. The first day, he went with Nick and introduced him to the foreman. He explained that Nick did not know English. The foreman nodded to show he understood, and George went away.

The foreman took Nick to an elevator that carried them to the fourth floor of the big building. There they stepped out into a large room, the floor of which was covered with tubes and spindles. He showed Nick by pantomime how to clean the spindles carefully, and left him.

Alone in the large room, Nick set to work cleaning. He worked steadily. Outside the sun grew hot. It was noon and he was hungry, but he did not know how to call for the elevator, and he kept on working. At three o'clock the foreman remembered him. He came up and showed Nick a water fountain in the hall outside the room, took him to the wash-room, and offered him a piece of a sandwich when he found Nick had brought no lunch. Then Nick returned to work.

At five o'clock the foreman came and made signs for him to go home.

At night Nick told George about his day. The work was not hard, he said, only tiring to sit on the floor and bend the back over the spindles. He told George about the lunch, and together they went to buy bread and sausage for the next day. George did hard physical labor all day, and at night he was tired and went to bed early.

Nick lay a while awake and thought of the lemon groves on the island at home, of the clear blue sky and dancing water on which the tiny fishing boats rocked. He thought of the dusty roads and the whitewashed houses with their green balconies and red tiled roofs, and the green black of the cypress trees that leaned against them.

The next day he returned to the mill and continued his cleaning where he had stopped. He found a few new ways to clean the tubes more quickly and he worked steadily. The room had large windows, filled with small opaque panes of glass. He could not see clearly through them, but the outline of a tree showed in silhouette against one. He could hear the sparrows that twittered in the branches. At noon he took out his sandwich and ate it, washing it down with water from the fountain in the hall. George had added some olives to the bread and sausage. They made Nick homesick, and he was very lonely.

The third day, in the middle of the



## STRANGE BREED

morning, the foreman brought a second man to the fourth floor. He took him to the other side of the room and showed him by gestures how to clean the parts for spinning.

Silently the two men worked. Nick could not explain it, but somehow the presence of the second man he could not speak to made him even more lonely. It was a gray day with storm clouds in the air.

At noon, he took out his lunch and ate it without moving from his place. The man across the room saw, and opened his newspaper-wrapped sandwich also. Silently they ate and then resumed their work. The food stuck in Nick's throat.

Outside, the sky grew black and a wind blew up. The sparrows made more noise and the wind whipped the tree branches against the window. Thunder followed lightning. The rain beat steadily and hard. High up as they were, they could hear it rushing in the gutters. His desolation made Nick feel hollow. It was dark

to see to clean, but they kept on working.

It was a summer storm and, once its violence was spent, it subsided quickly. The sky through the window grew lighter. The man across the room looked at Nick and made motions to show he was thirsty. Out of his own terrible loneliness, Nick had pity and beckoned the man to follow him. He led him out into the hall to the drinking fountain.

As the other man approached it, Nick said in his native Greek, "*πινε, κακομοίρην*"—"Drink, you poor devil."

The other man, stooping to the fountain, stopped in amazement. A strange joy broke over his face.

"*πατριώτην*" he said—"Fellow countryman."

And they fell on each other's neck and wept.

---

Jewel Drickamer is a librarian in the literature division of the Cleveland Public Library, and this is her first published prose sketch.

## STRANGE BREED

JESSIE T. ELLISON

*So many people I have never known . . .  
So many lands that I shall never see;  
And yet all nations of the past  
Contribute blood that flows in me.*

*Of all the ancient hopes and greeds  
I am the small, yet infinite sum;  
And even now I bear the seeds  
Of states and histories to come.*

Jessie T. Ellison is a young free lance writer, now living in the South.

## ORDEAL BY CHRISTMAS

MILLA Z. LOGAN

**B**IG placards all over town warned "Only 15, Only 14, days before Christmas." I had spent the last two weeks of school stringing pop corn, daubing red and green paint on pasteboard cards, working furiously against a December 25th deadline to finish my presents.

But at home there was no bustle of preparations. Christmas in Serbia, in the old country, was on January 7th. All this flurry was for the American Christmas which had nothing to do with us.

January 7th? That was next year. It was not even on the calendar on which Miss Kelly had been marking off the days to Christmas.

This was the final touch to the year's humiliations. That first year at school had been a nightmare of unknown customs. Although I was born in this country and my father's family had been here since the '49 days, my mother was determined that the Serbian language should be as instinctive with me as with a child in the old country. This called for a very severe program, part of which was pre-school isolation from "American" children.

My first shock in an all-American environment was in finding that the few words of English I had managed to pick up did not constitute a vocabulary adequate to the transaction of affairs in the first grade. On the first day of school the teacher called our names and each child responded with a word. That was not so bad because I knew the word. Here at least I would not give my ignorance away. I could even go the other children one better. They could only answer "Pretsi-

dent," but I knew the "Pretsident's" name. I was the last to be called because, among other unhappy distinctions, I had a name that began with "Z." When my turn came, I was ready and confident. "Pretsident Taft," I boomed and then laughed as loudly as any of the other children to show I was really only making a joke.

It was dismaying also to discover I belonged to a nationality of which no one had ever heard. "Siberian?" the teacher asked when I told her I was Serbian. Thereafter I frequently passed myself off as a Siberian because that got easy recognition.

But after my hard novitiate the early weeks in the first grade, I thought I had passed my Americanization test. Now came this new obstacle of Christmas. Once more I would have to be a pariah among the Murphys and the McCarthys.

I weathered this shock by refusing to believe my family would stick to the old-country Christmas custom. How could they resist the glitter and tinsel of this exciting season? Who could go into a store, who could smell the fir trees and hear the carols, without giving in?

It was five days and then four days before Christmas, and still there was no sign of weakening. Christmas trees were sparkling in windows at night, brightly wrapped presents from American friends were arriving at the house. Surely we could open them on December 25th. Counting on my mother's generosity, I knew she would rush out to buy these friends some presents.

## ORDEAL BY CHRISTMAS

"On January 7th we shall show our appreciation," was all she said about the matter.

I wouldn't think of telling the other children about my terrible plight. I pretended we were getting ready for Christmas, too.

"Three more days, Two more days," I chanted with the others, but I knew the days to our Christmas were too many to be numbered on the fingers of both hands.

Two days before Christmas, I spied a little tree lighted in the window of my aunt's house across the street. I felt like a shipwrecked sailor who has seen a distant light. I was saved—my face was saved. The other children would never find out how near I had come to disgrace. We were going to have Christmas after all. My aunt had broken down. Now we could, too.

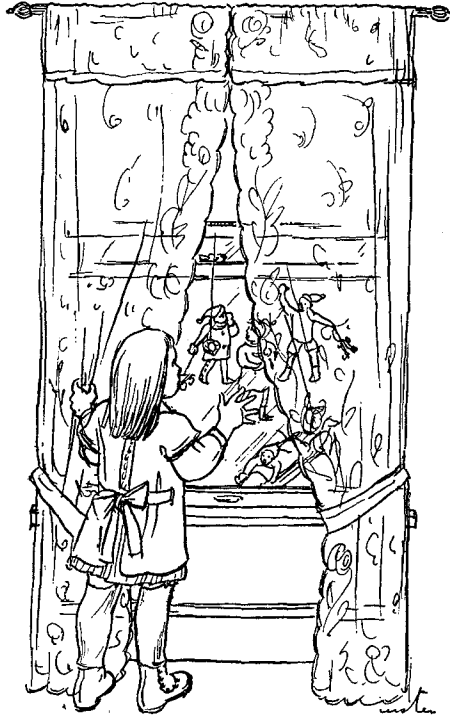
I called my mother and pointed the tree out to her. "Your aunt has broken her agreement," my mother said quietly. "She is making a compromise. For this Christmas she is having a make-believe tree for the children. For our Christmas she will have the big real tree. Well, if that's the way she wants it, all right. We will celebrate our Christmas the true way, by the Julian calendar."

On Christmas Eve, when all hope was lost, we were invited to a Santa Claus party in the home of some neighbors, but nothing could drag me to it. I was still supporting the fiction that we were having Christmas like everybody else, and at this point my position forced me into complete retirement. There I stayed during Christmas Day.

I was able to get seclusion because one of my aunts had married a Roman Catholic and as an obedient wife she was yielding to his customs. I was invited to spend the day at their house and, since they had no children, I took refuge there gladly.

I scurried up the hills to them like a messenger on a life-and-death message, never stopping once to greet my friends who were on the streets with their new Christmas wagons and doll buggies. It was dark when they took me home. I had made it. Nobody had found out my shame.

The day after Christmas I looked out the window, and there they were again—



all the children tearing up and down on their tricycles and skates. The little girls were out with their new dolls and new sweaters and hair ribbons. What would I do when my mother told me to go out to play? There was nothing to do but obey when she buttoned me up in my old sweater. I was trapped.

The egoism of childhood—not my own but that of my playmates—saved me. They were not interested in my toys. They wanted to show off their own. I got by once more.

## COMMON GROUND

But now came the real problem. Any worries I had had up to now were trifling compared with what I was to face. Christmas was over. We went back to school. My imagination pulled me through the assignment the teacher gave to tell "How I Spent Christmas." The first phase of the ordeal was over. The real crisis was to come.

After New Year's Day, when all the neighbors were taking down their trees and settling down to their routines, my family burst into a fireworks of Christmas preparations. The biggest tree that had ever been trimmed in our neighborhood was unloaded in front of our house, while children of all ages gathered to look with wonder on this unseasonal activity. But even this was not too bad, because one or two of our dilatory neighbors had not yet taken down their trees.

"Make them keep it up, make them keep it up," I prayed hard to myself every time I passed one of their houses.

Outside our house the world was back in its every-day clothes, but inside, candles, Christmas ornaments, sleek hams, and candies glistened. That was fun as long as no one on the outside found out about it. I went to school every day and kept inside myself the excitement that could not be shared.

A few days before our Christmas, my mother found she had run out of greeting cards. She wrapped up a silver dollar and told me to go to the stationers' to buy some. I froze to the spot. Ask for Christmas cards, now? What would the man think? How would I ever face him?

On the way to the store I mapped out my strategy. Ordinarily it was a treat to go into "The Brownie Store." This time I marched in tight-lipped and went about my business. I told Mr. Brown my mother had sent me out to buy some birthday cards. Then I looked over his assortment very carefully. They were all right, yes,

but not quite what I wanted. You see, I explained to him, my mother wanted some birthday cards for friends whose birthdays were very close to Christmas and so she wanted something, well, a little Christmassy. Then I had an idea. How about Christmas cards? Then my mother could write birthday greetings on them. Maybe Mr. Brown had some Christmas cards left. He did. He has! he has! my heart kept beating out. That meant I wouldn't have to go through this again with another storekeeper. I decided to buy a dozen so that my mother could "choose" the prettiest.

This was a narrow escape. After that, I coasted lightly into Christmas. Two days before, I was marking time by reciting, "*Danas Dan, Sutra Dan, Preko Sutra Bozhich Dan*—Today a day, tomorrow a day, and day after Christmas Day."

I had waited a long time and I had worried a lot, but it was going to be worth it.

On Christmas Eve my mother led us into the most beautiful room I had ever seen. There was a tree such as none of my friends could imagine. My uncle was dressed as Santa Claus, and all the relatives were there to see me and my little brother receive our presents. We had to wait some time because letters from relatives who could not be there had to be read first. There was also a letter from an uncle who had died during the year but who had loved us so much he had not been able to go without leaving a long message for us. These delays heightened the excitement and we didn't mind them at all.

Our presents were so wonderful they made me cry. I was ashamed of all my doubts and worries, and I hated myself for having criticized my mother. Everything I had ever mentioned during the year was there. Exquisitely hand-made clothes for my old and new dolls, books

## ORDEAL BY CHRISTMAS

that had to be sent for in New York, which was way back East. All these things my mother had planned for me secretly while I was almost hating her.

We played with our toys all evening while the grown-ups ate a feast of sea food—no meat could be eaten until Christmas Day.

On Christmas Day we stayed home from school. We spent the time indoors to keep from answering questions on the street or over back fences. We were dying to try out our new toys, but that would have to wait.

The day was very dull for me. It was a grown-up hurdy-gurdy with streams of men pouring into the house all day. According to the old-country custom, the women stayed home, but the men, in bands of five or six, visited all the houses in the colony, sampling a *priganitsa* or a piece of *torta* and drinking a glass of wine or a liqueur in each place. It got very tiresome listening to the same song, "*Vesela Ye Srbadia*," all day long. We had no children to play with. My father was out doing his duty with one of the roving bands, and my mother and her sister were busy answering door bells, slicing pieces of cake, pouring wines, and urging everybody to stay a while longer. Nobody paid any attention to my brother and me. Toward the end of the day we took our posts at the windows and watched people come and go from our aunt's house.

Once I had to go to the grocery store for a loaf of bread. A little girl in my class at school was there, and I was afraid she would wonder why I had been absent when I was well enough to go to the store. "Having a nice Christmas?" the grocer asked me as he tied the string around the bread. I just stared at him numbly. On my way home I assured myself the little girl had not heard him.

I wanted to stay home the next day, too, because there was a holiday litter in

the house and there were so many good left-overs to eat, but my mother would not allow it. She wrote my note to the teacher, and I got my books and went reluctantly back to school. None of the children in the school yard said anything to me about Christmas; I felt the crisis was over. I laid my note on Miss Kelly's desk and slipped into my seat. Everything was going to be all right.

But during the reading lesson, Miss Kelly called on me. Just before I started to read, she stopped me. "Class, you will be very much interested in what I am going to tell you about Milla," she announced. "Yesterday was her Christmas. You see she does not celebrate Christmas like the rest of us. Where her people come from, they celebrate Christmas on the 7th of January instead of on December 25th as we do. Now, suppose you tell us about your Christmas, dear."

The floor did not open up and swallow me. I did not faint. No act of God or nature intervened to save me.

I don't know how I lived through it or what I said. While it lasted, I refused to believe it was real.

"Louder, dear, we can't hear you," Miss Kelly urged, each time I was about to give up. I couldn't make out what the children were thinking. They gaped at me, suspiciously, I thought. If they would only go on studying their reading lesson!

I got through it somehow, but as I sat down I made a resolution that I kept all through my school days. Hereafter I would go to school on our Christmas. I saw just where I had failed to cover up my tracks.

It never happened again.

---

Milla Z. Logan is a West Coast newspaperwoman. Her "Racial Discrimination Not Allowed" appeared in the Summer 1944 issue of CG.

The cut is by Bernadine Custer.

## LEGACY

LEILA BARRETT

KAY BRENT's dark eyes were puzzled as she stared at the envelope. The writing was strange, but the postmark was painfully familiar. Why would anyone be writing her from that Texas Army camp now? She opened the letter quickly. It was brief: the writer had a week's furlough and planned on visiting New York. He had been a friend of her son, Terry. Would she mind if he came to see her? He would let her know when he arrived. It was signed "Sam Levin."

That must be the boy Terry had referred to only as Sammy. She remembered now his queer letter which arrived almost as soon as she had from Texas. It had jolted her strangely, as though his had been the loss. She read the name again and frowned. Sam Levin. Terry had never been particular in his choice of friends. That had been one of the things which worried her when he enlisted. While he was with her, she could keep track of his friends—or so she thought. There was a time when Terry brought home strange foreign-looking children. When he was six, it had been a little Chinese girl who had been lost; others of various colors and creeds followed until the day she found him in earnest discussion with an awkward, large-featured lad about his own age. The stranger's hair was shaggy, his clothes too small, and he spoke dreadful English. She called Terry to her room and closed the door.

"Terry, where did you pick up that horrible boy?" She spoke quietly as was her habit.

"You don't mean Jake Goldberg, Mom? Why, Jake's the smartest guy I know! He's a whiz at math—he's practically won the prize!" Terry exclaimed indignantly. Whether it was the expression of admiration in his eyes or his boast of Jake's cleverness, Kay's anger flared.

"He's probably the tackiest one, too. And his speech! How can you bear to listen to him?" Kay spoke with unusual sharpness.

Terry looked at her peculiarly, almost scornfully.

"His people are poor and they don't know much English; but they're nice, Mom, truly they are. And Jake isn't always going to speak as he does now." His defensive words only heightened her resentment.

"Understand, Terry. I won't have you associating with Jake Goldberg or his kind. You'll be talking like them before you know it." Even as she said it, the words sounded inane. She couldn't be jealous of the uncouth boy, but she had hoped Terry would be this year's prize winner.

Terry started to speak, then turned away abruptly.

Kay remembered the incident particularly, for her mother was visiting. She didn't want her to think Jake was a sample of Terry's associates. But later she overheard the boy talking to his grandmother.

"Jake's a good kid, Gran. Just because he isn't like us—" He broke off as Kay entered the room, and hurried out.

Terry had never questioned or criticized



## LEGACY

her before. She blamed Jake, and her annoyance and dislike was intensified.

"D'you know, Kay, you're an awful snob?" her mother said.

"Why, mother?" Kay had been amused in spite of her annoyance.

"Your grandfather would hardly have been welcome in your home. You wouldn't have approved of him either." Her mother had never used that dry, satiric tone to her before. But Kay's feelings were too muddled to explain even to her mother.

"I'm sorry you feel that way. But I can't be too careful of Terry's associates. It's today's associations that will determine the kind of man he will be, you know." Kay believed her words as she said them. Her mother said no more, and Kay soon forgot about it. When it did occur to her, it was with a smile at being called a snob by her gentle mother.

Terry had been about thirteen then. But Kay wondered now if it had been a good idea after all, for while he brought home no more Goldbergs, she didn't always know where he went after school.

Now it was three months since Terry's fatal accident at the Army camp in Texas. For several weeks after it, she had received a stream of letters from the men of his Company. Nice lads that they were, they had taken time out to tell her what a swell guy and good soldier her son had been. The Company had been scheduled for overseas duty, and she wondered where they had been sent. Terry had hoped it would be England; he wanted to visit the Yorkshire village his grandmother had come from and had told him so much about.

She was continually reminded of him. The nights were worse; it was then that the devilish little if's came to torment her. She had worried about his going overseas, and now she kept thinking that if he had been killed on the battlefield she would

have been prepared. But in her heart she knew the hurt would not have been less. For eighteen years Terry had filled her life, been her life; every thought, every plan, had been for him. How was it possible to keep on living with so much of herself gone?

In spite of the irritation Sam Levin's name caused her, Kay was excited at the idea of seeing one of Terry's late companions. She would have preferred it to be someone else, a Smith or a Jones, for it was difficult to believe Terry would have chosen Sam Levin for a friend. But to hear about Terry, of the part of his life she hadn't shared, she could associate with any kind of person temporarily.

It was a week later when the receptionist at the office advised her a corporal was asking for her. Kay fussed with the papers on her desk for several minutes. Now Sam Levin was here, she knew meeting him would be an ordeal. All young soldiers reminded her of Terry. As they came toward her on the street, her heart would pound. Somehow she always expected to see him. Yet her smile was grim when she rose to meet her caller. This boy would hardly remind her of her son.

Sam Levin was standing at the window overlooking the river when Kay entered the reception room. That had been Terry's favorite view of New York; she had found him waiting there for her many, many times. She stood rooted in the doorway. They were of similar height and build, the same dark hair. But when the soldier turned to meet her, except for his blue eyes the resemblance ceased. In place of Terry's young laughing eyes and wide smiling mouth, she saw serious, wistful eyes and a straight mouth not accustomed to laughter. His smile was uneasy, but he strode toward her, his cap clutched in nervous fingers.

## COMMON GROUND

"When did you arrive?" Kay stared unsmilingly as she steadied herself against the door.

"About an hour ago. I knew where you worked—Terry told me." His soft drawl broke off. "I hope—I—I didn't mean to interrupt—"

Kay forced a smile. "No, that's all right. They don't mind my taking a few minutes off." She tried to sound casual, and Sam's mouth widened into a relieved smile. "Suppose you meet me in the lobby at six. We'll go some place for dinner—where we can talk. Unless you have a date?" she added fearfully. She couldn't bear not to hear about Terry. She was relieved when the boy shook his head.

"I'll be here. At six," he repeated gravely.

They sat in a quiet midtown restaurant. Kay had been careful to choose one where she thought she wasn't likely to meet anyone she knew. Their order had been taken, the glasses filled, and the customary tray of rolls placed before them.

"You're not from this part of the country?" Kay asked.

"No, Mrs. Brent." The answer was courteous but short.

"I didn't think so. You don't sound like either Brooklyn or the Bronx," she added smiling. She had been quick to notice his manner of speech. Boys usually talked easily to her, but this one offered no information about himself. "Are your folks in New York?"

Sam shook his head as he tugged at his neat tie.

"But coming all the way to New York! Why, most of your furlough will be spent on the train!" Kay exclaimed, puzzled.

The ready blush washed Sam's face, and he did not reply immediately. "That's true, Mrs. Brent. But it doesn't matter where I spend my furlough." He paused. "You see—I have no folks."

"Oh! I'm sorry." Kay was silent as she crumbled a roll. Why couldn't it have been he instead of Terry? There would have been no one to miss him. She flushed as she realized the trend of her thoughts. If he was as alone and desolate as she was, he had probably wished it many times himself. Well, she had forced it out of him. He certainly wasn't asking for sympathy.

"Then it must be a girl!" She managed a gay smile.

"No, ma'am. I haven't a girl friend." His fingers found their way to his collar. He wasn't enjoying her questioning. "I really came to see you." The words fell abruptly on Kay's surprised ears.

"Oh!" This boy said the most unexpected things. He took all the starch out of her. It was her turn to be uncomfortable; he was quite at ease now. He was speaking in a low voice.

"I wrote you when Terry—" He gulped convulsively. "It's hard for a guy like me to write what he feels." He smiled sheepishly. "I guess it's even harder to say it, though." They were both silent while the waitress placed their order before them and refilled the glasses.

"Terry wanted me to meet you, Mrs. Brent." Sam was turning his glass round and round. "We were to get a furlough together; I was to come home with him. We were going to have a big time."

Kay's eyes misted. That sounded like Terry.

"I understand," she murmured.

"I don't think you do, Mrs. Brent." He leaned forward tensely. "You know what a swell guy he was. He wanted to share what he had."

Kay remembered the letter Terry had written thanking her for the first box she had sent him while he was taking basic training. "It was swell, Mom, but it didn't last long. Some kids don't get packages, you know." Sam interrupted her thoughts.

## LEGACY

"He knew I never received any mail. So he used to read your letters to me. Oh, not all; just the parts he thought would interest me. His bunk was next to mine, you see. When you sent him a box, he'd say it was for us both; he'd even read the part of your letter that said so." His eyes were bright as he looked at Kay. "What a guy!"

Kay looked down at her plate. If she looked at Sam, his eyes might bring tears to her own. And she wasn't the crying sort. But her doubts as to Terry's friendship for this boy vanished.

"He was so darn proud of you, Mrs. Brent." Sam had no difficulty talking about Terry. "He told me how you alone looked after him when his Dad died. How you worked and saved to send him to college; what a good sport you were about his enlisting. He knew it was tough. I guess he never told you that." He paused and took up his knife and fork. Unconsciously Kay noticed he held them correctly. "He was going to make it up to you—after the war."

Sam's words bit deep in Kay's heart. She'd been a little unjust to Terry, then. There had been times when she'd thought he didn't realize or appreciate her sacrifices sufficiently, that he was inclined to take them for granted.

"I hope you didn't mind my coming, Mrs. Brent." Sam was searching for his words. "Terry said you wouldn't care what I am." He looked steadily at her.

For a moment Kay did not understand his meaning. She had been thinking of what he'd said about Terry. His words "what I am" brought quick realization. Why, she had completely forgotten her prejudice in her eagerness to hear about Terry. What did it matter now? She looked up to see Sam's eyes on her and she flushed uncomfortably. He seemed to see through her.

"Why should I mind, Sam?" Kay

sparred. "You were Terry's friend." As she spoke, she recalled the morning she had received his letter. Because of his name, she'd imagined a different person from this well-mannered, quiet lad. If it hadn't been for her overpowering desire to hear about Terry, she wouldn't have met him. Because of his name, without knowing another thing about him! She tried to justify herself. Hadn't she forgotten her prejudice after she met him? But she had come only because it suited her, she admitted. Her anger flared at Sam for putting her in the wrong, even as she squirmed under his steady eyes. But Sam wasn't giving her much time for self-analysis.

"Terry was my friend, Mrs. Brent. I was sure you must feel as he did—you influenced him so much. Otherwise I wouldn't be here." His voice was confident and a smile lifted the corners of his straight mouth. "One of the boys—there were a couple of Terry's old classmates in our Company—when I mentioned I was coming to see you, well—he said he wouldn't if he were in my place. He didn't use exactly the words, but he implied you were snobbish." He laughed. "I didn't believe him, but I guess it made me a little nervous."

Kay flushed. Her mother's satiric voice came back to her: "Do you know, Kay, you're an awful snob?" But it wasn't true!

"Terry was only a kid, but I guess he knew that accident of birth is kind of tough—on some of us. Scars us before we're even born." There was a humorous quirk on Sammy's lips as he spoke.

"Some of the Joes used to think it funny to call us names, me and Cohen and Goldstein. Perhaps they didn't mean any harm, but Terry didn't like it. You should have heard him, Mrs. Brent." He laughed. "He'd go to town. 'Shut up, you Nazis!' Only he'd use stronger language. 'Where d'you think you are, anyway?"

## COMMON GROUND

Germany? It's jerks like you that started this blankety-blank war!' Then he'd calm down a bit. 'See here, you punks, people can't help what they're born, can they? It's what we are that counts, see? And don't ever forget it, you guys aren't so hot yourselves.' At first they used to say he was nuts. Then they called him a Communist." Sam smiled gently at the indignant expression the word called up on Kay's face.

"They really didn't mean it, Mrs. Brent. It's just their way when they don't understand. Anyone who has different ideas from theirs and has the guts to express them is a Communist to them. They just don't know any better. Perhaps no one taught them differently. But Terry didn't care. They couldn't shut him up. After a while the name-calling stopped. And now—if a new guy starts anything, one of the same fellows hands him Terry's spiel. And it works, too."

Kay had been unable to move during Sam's account. Where had Terry imbibed his ideas? Surely not from her who had carefully limited his associations. She had never discussed religious or racial questions with him. She'd seen to his religious education—taught him his prayers and heard him say them when he was small; sent him to Sunday School and taken him regularly to church. Of course, she had thought it pretty awful for millions of people to be murdered because of their religion, but it really was too horrible to think about. And the stories might be purposely exaggerated for the propaganda effect. But, however exaggerated, she was thankful such things didn't happen in this country. She had contributed to her church fund for aiding the unfortunate people, what was left of them, and dismissed them from her mind. It had never occurred to her there was more to it than that. Now, as she looked at Sam, she understood why Terry

wanted her to meet him. It flashed on her suddenly that she was the cause of Terry's extreme tolerance.

Sam was watching her preoccupied expression. She was making no pretense of eating now.

"I hope you're not angry, Mrs. Brent. I guess I talk too much. I didn't mean to offend you."

His anxious tone roused her to speech. "No, Sam. I'm glad you told me." She spoke with the sincerity of deeply roused feeling. "I'm really very glad you came." She looked him directly in the eye.

"Terry and I couldn't come like we planned, but I knew he wanted me to come anyway," Sam answered awkwardly.

"Eat your dinner, Sam. You haven't much time and we have places to go." Kay's voice was rough as she tried to cover the surge of emotion the boy's words caused.

She had procured tickets for the Music Hall before she met him for dinner. It had been Terry's favorite place of amusement; he would have planned to take Sam there. And, too, she had thought, if he proves boorish it's an easy way to spend an evening. Sam protested at her paying for the tickets. She didn't expect him to do that, though he had picked up the dinner check before she knew it. She ended his objections quickly.

"Now listen, Sam. This isn't my treat. It's Terry's. Your trip to New York was his idea, wasn't it? And he wouldn't think much of his mother if she didn't do it the way he would have if—" She stopped abruptly to hide the choke in her voice. "And, anyway, I want to. We're going to paint the old town—well—if not exactly red," she laughed shakily, "we'll try to do it a deep shade of pink, shall we?"

Sam had arranged to stay at the USO for the two nights he would be in New York; but Kay wouldn't hear of it. She

## LEGACY

was determined to do everything Terry would have done. There was no reason why he shouldn't occupy Terry's room. She'd tried to find a smaller apartment, she explained, but the suitable ones cost more now than the one she was occupying. So Terry's room had been left untouched.

She found it difficult to sleep that night. This was not unusual, but her thoughts were. She was up the next morning at the regular hour. Sam was already dressed and reading a magazine. His bed was made and the room neat. He assisted Kay with the breakfast and with clearing up after. There were little repairs, the odd jobs Terry used to do: the loose plug on the toaster, the fraying percolator cord, the cupboard door that stuck. Before Sam left the kitchen, the repairs were made. Kay noticed how easily he performed the homely chores and wondered about his background.

"What time do you leave for the office, Mrs. Brent?" he asked.

"Oh, around 8:15," she replied casually.

"Then you're late!" Sam exclaimed.

"No, I've the day off." Kay smiled at his surprise. "Remember the 'phone call I made from Radio City last night? It was to my boss. He gave me time off while you're here." She talked rapidly. "I've worked for him for twelve years. He's regular. Has two boys in the service himself." Kay couldn't help smiling at Sam's expression.

"But—but you asked for time off for—for me?" he stuttered.

"Shall we plan what we're doing today?" Kay changed the subject abruptly. "Anything special you want to see?"

They started their sight-seeing with a ride on the top of a Fifth Avenue bus. The day was cool, but the sun was bright and warm, ideal for showing off New York's most beautiful Avenue. Sam was

interested in everything and kept her busy naming the places of interest.

The day went rapidly after that. Sam enjoyed every moment. He reminded Kay of a small boy at his first circus; a quiet, well-mannered child who asked many questions. The look of pride in his eyes and the careful way he held her arm as they crossed a street told Kay what being with her meant to him.

It wasn't easy to get Sam to talk of himself. Kay extracted his story piecemeal. His parents had come from Europe after the last war. His mother had died at his birth; his father when he was fourteen. He had no relatives that he knew of, so, when he heard talk of his being placed in an institution, he ran away. He was tall and husky and had no trouble getting work. It had been lonesome without his Dad. He did his best to get an education, attending evening classes when it was possible and by reading. The Army was giving him a profession (that was why he hadn't yet gone overseas: he was taking special instruction), and after the war—well—. He was slow to make friends; he guessed he was shy; so there was no one to miss him if his number came up, he said with a smile that hurt Kay's throat. What a good job his father had done raising him without a mother. It must have been from him Sam learned the little courtesies she admired and had taken pains to inculcate in Terry. She found it increasingly difficult to think of Sam as different from Terry or the boys she knew. Sam's polite deference and his pleasure in small things was very gratifying.

They were dawdling over breakfast the next morning. Now that Sam was leaving in a matter of minutes, he was talking about himself with greater ease. The sun streamed on his water-smoothed hair. He looked younger, more his age, Kay



thought. Perhaps it was the smile in his eyes as well as on his lips that reminded her again of Terry. If his childhood had been like Terry's—. It had been the one object of her life to give Terry all the happiness possible. She had felt a double responsibility to him for the lack of his father. She had decided against re-marrying, fearing that by dividing her attention she might fail her boy. At least she had the satisfaction of accomplishing what she had set out to do. But now—she was high and dry. The curious blankness of the years ahead was frightening.

The sound of Sam's voice brought her back. "Terry had your picture on his shelf." He kept stirring his coffee. "I used to look at it and think perhaps my mother was like that, too." Kay pushed her cup away; it was difficult to swallow. "I guess when one's lonely, it helps to dream a bit." His smile was very young.

"So when Terry—went—we both lost the one we cared for most." Sam's eyes were serious. "He was the only friend I ever had—except for Dad. Why, he almost had me believing in this wonderful, brave new world we're supposed to be fighting for!" The last words were so low Kay wasn't sure she had heard aright. She rose from the table.

"We'd better be starting, Sam." Her voice was husky. "We mustn't be late getting to Grand Central. You'll probably have to stand all the way if you are."

Sam looked carefully around Terry's room before he left. It had been the same while they were having breakfast. Kay had been amused at his unspoken interest in the old Daulton sugar bowl and creamer and the pewter coffee pot that had belonged to her grandmother. He was silent as Kay turned the key in the lock and during their walk to the subway station.

The announcement of the platform number of Sam's train came over the

loud speaker, and they joined the throng that immediately surrounded the gate. Uniforms dominated the scene; young boys with here and there an officer with graying or balding hair. A young girl giggled nervously as she held tightly to a sailor's arm with both her thin hands; another was weeping, her face hidden against a soldier's chest. A white-haired woman furtively raised her veil and dabbed at her eyes. Others were strangely white-faced and silent as they eyed the hands of the domineering clock above them. Kay never liked farewells. She hated them now.

"I don't know what to say, Mrs. Brent. How to thank you." Sam's low voice came from a great distance.

"There's no need for thanks, Sam. I wish it had been more." Kay's voice did not sound as casual as she intended. It came to her that she had been happier the last couple of days than she had been since Terry—

"It's meant a lot to find you just as I'd hoped you'd be. I'm sorry I ever doubted." He was smiling down at her apologetically. His eyes had the old wistful, lonely expression when he spoke again.

"We go overseas very soon now." His face reddened. "You—you won't think me fresh if I ask you to write me, will you, Mrs. Brent? When you aren't too busy?"

"Why, of course, I'll write. Every week, no twice a week, just as I used to—" Her eyes blurred. "And I'll expect you to write me all the news, the places you go and the people—everything." She laughed, for the tears were very near.

The gate opened and the people surged through. Sam held out his hand to Kay. She sensed rather than saw the downward motion of his broad shoulders. Holding him by both arms, she raised her face to his.

"Good luck, son," she whispered invol-



## AT THE CORE

untarily to the boy who had not known a mother. Sam kissed her quickly and without a word strode into the crowd. As he reached the stairs, he turned and looked back. He could see her smile as she waved to him, but he couldn't see the tears welling in her eyes. His face lighted and, as he saluted her stiffly, she saw his lips move. She knew he was answering her last words to him.

She turned away slowly. She was due at the office at one o'clock. She glanced at her watch. It was eleven-thirty. She knew exactly where to buy overseas equipment, and there was just time. Tonight

she would bake a batch of cookies, the kind with the walnuts she used to send for Terry—and Sammy, too, though she hadn't known it.

She smiled. It had better be a big batch. Sammy might know someone who never received packages either.

---

*Leila Barrett has spent the greater part of her life in Panama, though she now lives in New York City. She combines writing with housekeeping and serving as Nurse's Aide in New York's largest hospital and the Red Cross Blood Bank.*

## AT THE CORE

GENE CLAUSSEN

I took a chance on some ham and eggs in a lunch wagon on the Eastside. The proprietor, whom the truck drivers called Kelley, had a dyspeptic face and jowls like a Saint Bernard's. A Mexican boy came in and sat on the stool to my right. When Kelley saw him, he winked to us and inclined his head toward the Mexican, neglecting to serve him water or take his order. He leaned toward one of the truck drivers and began talking loudly enough for all five of us to hear.

"You know I used to live out in Los Angeles on a street called Lemp. They was Mexicans runnin' the corner store and Mexes on streets all around us but they wasn't a one in our block on Lemp. Well," Kelley's voice became more confidential, "some people acrost the street from us was put out because whenever the guy beat his wife she always raised a fuss and called the police and this was keepin'

the neighbors awake. And then, what do you think that damn real estate woman that was rentin' the place wanted to do? You guessed it! Rent it to Mexicans. So, when I seen her over there showin' 'em through, I just walked straight over and I said, 'Listen, sister, what commission do you get for rentin' to these Mexes?' The lady got all fussed up, see, and said, 'Why—ah—Mr. McElligott, I'd like to have you meet the Lopez family. They are Castilian Spaniards.' And I said, 'Listen, sister, Mexes is Mexes. I'll give you the measly commission you'd make on the deal, but I'm not having anyone but a white family acrost from me. If you rent to them Mexes, the people in this block is going to get together and drive 'em out.' Then I crost over to my house and slammed the door. Laugh! I thought I'd split! I'm tellin' you—the look on those Mexes' faces! They looked like the earth

## COMMON GROUND

was going to open up and swallow 'em all the way down to hell."

Then Kelley quit laughing and his face froze as he leaned toward the Mexican boy and said, "Too bad you're in such a hurry, Pancho." The boy, now the color of port wine, slid from the stool in an anguish of humiliation and left.

Kelley threw back his head and let go with a horse laugh while his steady customers chuckled. One of the boys remarked slyly, "I guess he wasn't hungry, eh, Kelley?" Another, equally adept at subtle insinuation, said, "Oh, yes, he was, but he just lost his appetite, suddent-like." Then they all laughed.

"By God," continued Kelley, elated by his success, "you don't find no wops, or Mexes, or niggers eatin' in this joint. I remember when I used to live in California. I was a custodian (janitor to you guys) for the Board of Education. Well, I was off for a coupla weeks with the flu, and do you know who they put on the job to take my place? A nigger woman! By damn, a nigger woman! Well, I'm tellin' you, I was fit to be tied! But as if that wasn't enough—when my helper was off for a spell, who did they send down to work with me but two niggers, black as night! And did I make them jigs strut? I'm tellin' you I didn't give either one of 'em a peaceful minute. Damn jigaboos!"

A lady carrying several books came in. Kelley quit talking and served her water and asked what she would have. She said, "A cup of coffee, if you please." She drank it quickly as she glanced at her newspaper. She was a trim little woman (about forty) with a quiet sort of dignity.

After she had left, Kelley held his nose high and affected a haughty Oxonian accent. "A cawp of coffee, if you ple-ahs." Then he blasted, "Another damn school teacher if I ever saw one! When I used to be a janitor in California, they'd holler for more heat and they'd holler that it was too hot. I'd go in the room when they was yellin' for heat and I'd say, 'By God, if you're cold, why don't you close the windows?' And they'd answer something about 'No ventilation.' They're the dumbest bunch of animals on the face of the earth and I used to tell 'em so. And stuck up? Say, you never want to see such a snooty bunch. Do they speak to ya in the halls? Do they say, 'How are ya, Kelley?' Hell, no! They just walk past ya like ya ain't there. Like ya don't belong to the human race. By God, I don't like that kinda stuff. No, I don't! I believe one guy's as good as the next. Ain't that the way you guys feel?"

---

*Gene Claussen is a young California writer and this is her first published story.*

# • The Pursuit of Liberty •

CONDUCTED BY MILTON R. KONVITZ

## THE RIGHT OF RESIDENCE

THE War Relocation Authority has been making commendable attempts to re-settle Japanese Americans whose loyalty to the United States is beyond question, but opposition to the program has been expressed lately by public officials even in the City of New York and in New Jersey. The impression has been created in some quarters that a state or a city has the right to bar its doors against the entry of these American citizens. Even the courageous statement by Secretary Ickes in defense of the policies of the WRA has not removed this impression.

Since the end of 1941, however, there has been no doubt concerning the right of an American citizen to move freely from state to state and to establish his home at any place of his choice. This question was settled in the case of *Edwards v. California*, decided by the United States Supreme Court. Edwards, a resident of California and a citizen of the United States, left for Texas to bring back to California his brother-in-law, who was an indigent person employed by the WPA. When they got to California, the brother-in-law obtained financial assistance from the FSA. Edwards was convicted of violation of a California statute which made it a misdemeanor to bring into the state an indigent person who was not a resident of the state. The United States Supreme Court reversed the judgment of conviction, holding that the statute was an unconstitutional barrier to interstate commerce. California argued that the huge influx of migrants had resulted in problems of health, morals, and especially finance, and so it

should be permitted to exercise its police powers to keep out indigent migrants. To this argument Mr. Justice Byrnes replied by saying that there is a prohibition against attempts on the part of a state to isolate itself from difficulties common to all states by restraining the transportation of persons or property across its borders.

Mr. Justice Douglas, in a concurring opinion, went further than Byrnes and said that the right to move freely from state to state occupies a more protected position in our constitutional system than does the movement of cattle and coal across state lines: this right is an incident of national citizenship, protected by the privileges and immunities clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. This right is enjoyed by all citizens, and the poor and destitute are no exception.

Similarly, Mr. Justice Jackson found the commerce clause insufficient, and criticized the Byrnes opinion for employing that clause as the basis for the Court's decision. He said that, notwithstanding the fact that the Court had failed in the past to find specific instances of "privileges or immunities," it should now squarely hold that "it is a privilege of citizenship of the United States, protected from state abridgment, to enter any state of the Union, either for temporary sojourn or for establishment of permanent residence therein and for gaining resultant citizenship thereof. If national citizenship means less than this, it means nothing." Furthermore, Jackson said, since a citizen has the duty to render military service, he should have the

## COMMON GROUND

right to migrate to any part of the land he must defend.

Does the right to move freely from state to state apply to aliens as well as to citizens? As to this, Jackson referred to the earlier case of *Truax v. Raich*, in which Mr. Justice Hughes said that, since aliens are admitted into the United States

under Federal law, they have the right to enter and abide in any state in the Union.

It is therefore apparent that the persons who offer resistance to the program of resettlement of Japanese Americans, citizens or aliens, are violating the fundamental law of the land.

## SEGREGATION BY FEDERAL LAW

IN connection with Japanese Americans, it is important to observe that this war-time problem has led to the first instance of racial segregation ordered by Federal law. While segregation by state law is common in the South, it took the present World War to import this form of discriminatory legislation into the laws of the national government.

Hirabayashi, an American citizen of Japanese ancestry, was convicted of violating a 1942 act of Congress, which made it a misdemeanor to disregard restrictions imposed by a commander in a military area. Hirabayashi had violated the curfew order which directed all persons of Japanese ancestry in the military area to be within their places of residence between 8 p.m. and 6 a.m. He claimed that the order was unconstitutional as a discrimination between citizens of Japanese ancestry and those of other descents. The case went to the United States Supreme Court, which unanimously upheld the order and the statute under which Hirabayashi was convicted.

The Court, in an opinion by the Chief Justice, said that the order was a defense measure to safeguard the military area, and that its promulgation rested within the judgment of other branches of the government. The Court looked to the Fifth Amendment, and not the Four-

teenth (which is a limitation on states only), and pointed out that the former contains no equal protection clause and restrains only such Congressional discriminatory legislation as amounts to a denial of due process. While distinctions between citizens solely because of their ancestry are odious to a free people, it does not follow that, in dealing with the perils of war, Congress and the Executive are precluded "from taking into account those facts and circumstances which are relevant to measures for our national defense and for the successful prosecution of the war, and which may in fact place citizens of one ancestry in a different category from others." The opinion points out that the decision is limited strictly to the curfew order as applied and at the time it was applied.

Mr. Justice Murphy, in a notable concurring opinion, pointed out that the case marks the first time the Court had sustained a substantial restriction of the personal liberty of citizens based upon the accident of race or ancestry. He found an analogy between the curfew order and the treatment accorded the Jews in Germany and other parts of Europe. "The result," he said, "is the creation in this country of two classes of citizens for the purposes of a critical and perilous hour—to sanction discrim-

## THE PURSUIT OF LIBERTY

ination between groups of United States citizens on the basis of ancestry. In my opinion this goes to the very brink of constitutional power." The only justification for the discrimination was the existence of a great emergency, the critical military situation which prevailed on the Pacific Coast area in the Spring of 1942, which created the urgent necessity of taking prompt and effective action to secure defense installations and military operations against the risk of sabotage and espionage.

The concluding paragraph in Murphy's

opinion strengthens our conclusion on the question of the right of Japanese Americans to move freely from state to state. He said that these persons may not be prevented from leaving the restricted military area "and going at large in other areas that are not in danger of attack and where special precautions are not needed. Their status as citizens . . . should at all times be accorded the fullest consideration and respect. When the danger is past, the restrictions imposed on them should be promptly removed and their freedom of action fully restored."

## SEGREGATION IN THE NORTH

SEGREGATION of races is legal in most parts of the South; it is illegal in the North, but it is not altogether nonexistent there. Recently the Supreme Court of New Jersey was called upon to say whether or not it was legal for the Trenton school authorities to send all Negro junior high school students to the Lincoln Junior High School, from which white pupils were excluded. This pattern of segregation had been in existence for many years, but it was not until 1943 that Negroes in Trenton undertook to challenge its legality. The Court held that this form of segregation was illegal, but it is doubtful if the decision will have much effect in other parts of New Jersey. The Manual Training and Industrial School for Colored Youths at Bordentown is still in existence, and separate schools for Negro pupils are to be found in many places in the central and southern parts of New Jersey.

In the State of New York, the citizens of Hillburn assigned all Negro pupils to

the old Brook School and all white pupils to the modern Main School. The matter was taken to the State Commissioner of Education, who ruled that race segregation in the school system was illegal. He ordered the Brook School closed and directed that all children be sent to the Main School. Thereupon the white parents withdrew their children from the Main School and left the building for the exclusive use of the Negro children. The white youngsters were sent to a private school. Now it appears that the whites are getting tired of paying tuition fees and have suggested that Main School, too, be closed, and all Hillburn children be sent out of the school district to nearby towns by bus. Of course the Negro citizens object to exposing their children needlessly to the hazards of transportation merely to conform to the whims and prejudices of their white neighbors.

This is how "the pursuit of liberty" goes on, even in the "free" states of New York and New Jersey.

## • The Press •

### THE NEGRO PRESS ON THE PARTY CONVENTIONS

THE CHICAGO DEFENDER

"The National Republican Convention last week nominated overwhelmingly Governor Thomas E. Dewey of New York as the party's standard-bearer. . . . If we are to consider his acceptance speech as a gauge of his ability to delineate the principles upon which the issues of this campaign will be resolved, then there is logical ground for gloom and mournful pessimism among the masses of voters. . . . There was no warrant of sagacious statesmanship; no bright, fresh thought brought into play. Nor was there any analytical treatment of the major problems which beset the nation in time of war and which await positive solution. . . . Nowhere in Dewey's acceptance speech or subsequent statements to the press do we find the invigorating freshness that underlies the unequivocal position of Wendell Willkie on international and domestic affairs, and on questions affecting the Negro and other minorities.

"We are not unalterably opposed to the Republican party, nor are we irrevocably committed against Governor Dewey's candidacy. However, until the Republican nominee clarifies in uncompromising terms his position on pressing pertinent issues with which our destiny is linked, common sense and candor dictate that we should weigh the facts rather than allow ourselves to be immersed in a swirl of oratory and partisan emotionalism."—*Editorial, July 8, 1944.*

"... For the Democrats 1944 will go down in history as the year of political appeasement that will live in infamy along with Munich. This time both

Negroes and Wallace were placed on the altar of sacrifice just as Czechoslovakia. . . .

"The Democratic race relations plank is a masterpiece of evasion. It says nothing and even represents a retreat from the wishy-washy 1940 stand which at least promised to do something about discrimination in the armed forces. . . . But political platforms . . . might almost be forgotten in this era of broken promises if men of unquestioned integrity with unblemished records would be offered in their stead. There was the significance and importance of the renomination of Vice-President Wallace. For it was Wallace, more than any other personality including President Roosevelt, who stood as the stalwart symbol of everything progressive in the Democratic Party. It was Wallace who represented more than any other platform exactly what the Negro wanted from the Democrats. It was Wallace who staunchly and defiantly braved the wrath of Dixie Bourbons to declare on the convention floor: 'The poll tax must go.' It was Wallace who epitomized the very essence of the Fair Employment Practices Committee when he declared for 'equal wages for equal work regardless of sex or race.' It was Wallace who was the platform.

"It was not the man Wallace that the Democrats defeated. It was what he stood for.

"But in Wallace's defeat, it was not the Vice-President who lost. It was the Democratic Party which lost. . . .

"Wallace in defeat emerges as the actual winner at this convention. He has



## THE PRESS

become the Willkie of the Democratic Party. He has become the man on the Democrats' conscience.

"For the Negro voters of America—two million strong and the unquestioned key to victory or defeat for either party in 1944—there can be one attitude and approach to this coming election. As of now, there is little to choose between the Democrats and Republicans. Negroes in coming days must become practical politicians. We must drive hard bargains with the two major parties. We must take a

'wait-and-see' attitude of complete independence from party ties.

"What both parties actually do, rather than promise, in the next months will be our criterion for political choices. Let the party bosses become wary and worried of our wrath. Let them know we are watching their every move, their every deed and misdeed. Let them never be sure that they have the Negro vote in their pocket.

"Only then can we ever hope to win our untrammelled freedom as first class citizens of this land."—*Editorial, July 29, 1944.*

## THE PITTSBURGH COURIER

"Viewed objectively and realistically, there is little in the recently adopted platform of the Republican party with which Negroes can quarrel. The platform condemns the injection of racial and religious prejudice into American life; pledges an immediate investigation into racial evils in the armed forces; favors submission of a constitutional amendment abolishing the poll tax; favors legislation against lynching and promises to push its enactment, and pledges legislation for a permanent Fair Employment Practices Commission. . . .

"Of course no one should entertain any illusions about political platforms, because they are usually designed solely to snare votes and promptly jettisoned after election, if found inconvenient or embarrassing, which they often are.

"Being the 'out' party, the Republicans have done their best to attract all to their banner while repelling no group or interest of importance. Being the 'in' party, the Democrats will probably make similar promises which all of us will await with interest.

"It would be dangerous, however, for Negro voters to delude themselves into

believing that political action alone can solve the color problem, so too much importance should not be attached to platform phraseology or the promises of job-seeking politicians."—*Editorial, July 8, 1944.*

"Now that the tumult and the shouting have died, and the smoke of battle cleared, to end one of the most important Democratic conventions in the party's history, dispassionate observers see in the nomination of Senator Harry S. Truman and the phraseology of the platform an appeasement of the South which must rank in cowardice and shortsightedness with the ineptitude shown by Chamberlain at Munich.

"Negroes throughout the land are warranted in believing that the National Democratic Party is still too much under the yoke of the South to treat with any degree of sympathy their problems and aspirations. The vacillating, meaningless 1944 'Negro plank' in the platform is even weaker than that given Negroes in 1940.

"The convention just finished was unique in that the 'Negro Question' af-

## COMMON GROUND

fected deliberations on all major issues before the convention to a greater degree than ever before in national political history. President Roosevelt was known to be the Democratic Presidential nominee weeks before the convention. The platform presented no difficulty, except as it would refer to Negroes.

"The selection of a Vice-President would not have been a serious problem but for the fact that Henry Agard Wallace was known to be extremely popular with the Negro people and one segment of organized labor—the *cio*. It is true that the activities of the *cio* in Mr. Wallace's behalf probably hurt his candidacy, but the determining considerations for his rejection was not *cio*—but the placating of Dixie. . . ." *Beginning of a front page story July 29, 1944 by William G. Nunn, Managing Editor of the Courier, run under the head "Democrats 'Sell' Race, Wallace, to Buy South."*

" . . . Those who know Henry Wallace also know that he has no personal ambition to be Vice-President of the United States. They know that he made the good fight, not for himself, but for his cause, the cause of liberalism. He knew that he was a symbol. He knew that his rejection would mean that honor and decency and fairness in human relations had suffered a setback. He knew that these forces, not Henry Wallace, the man or the Vice-President, were challenged, that what he stood for, that what most men want, was at stake.

"He went down fighting for the man who would not go down fighting for him. He went down fighting for the Roosevelt who sacrificed him to the spite of Jesse Jones of Texas, damned him with faint praise before the convention took place, and compromised him in a letter to a designing national committee chairman.

"With the axe of political decapitation

hanging over his head, boldly facing his enemies, he declared for political and economic democracy without regard to race, creed or religion, that there are no inferior races, that the poll tax must go and equal educational opportunities must come, that there must be equal jobs and equal pay, regardless of sex or race. . . .

"We know that liberalism is a cross to carry. We know that the man who picks up that cross and attempts to carry it, whether it be a Wallace or a Willkie, has set his feet on the road to Golgotha. The price of liberalism is political repudiation, death.

"But we have faith in Wallace, for he knows that the future belongs to the liberals. . . . The sacrifice he made will but fructify the seeds of liberalism. Mankind, the common man, is on the march. Men know that the spirit which Wallace expressed is not dead, that like a flame, upheld by such as he, it leads them on to new high levels for humanity. His words will ring clearly through distant centuries when the small, smart politicians shall have been forgotten.

"Who knows? His sacrifice may give birth to a new liberal party."—*Editorial, July 29, 1944.*

"Certain historically significant trends are developing in the wake of this summer's political activity. It would be wise to lift our eyes from the thicket of small timber in both of the party platforms and glimpse the promise of clearer political skies, which these events portend. For the first time since Reconstruction, the Negro has become a national political issue. A challenge is consequently thrust upon our leadership to do more than receive this product of our times as a happy gift. It must work quickly and wisely to redirect the political history of the American Negro into a new and permanent consistency with the democratic ideal. . . .

## THE PRESS

"This is in essence the key to political action on our part. We are an unknown quantity, fluid, vital, unpredictable, causing precipitations in the public life by our mere presence.

"Thus is dictated the desirability of our remaining a more or less complete entity and an unguessable one. If the Negro vote is split between the parties, its effect is neutralized and need not be reckoned with. Or, if it votes traditionally, even as a bloc, then it can command only insignificant and purely maintenance concessions. The fear of an empty tradition of party loyalty has been dissipated quite thoroughly in the last decade. But the fear of a dead center halt by the swinging pendulum is currently upon us. It may be suggested even that this is a new fear, born of an original situation. For, if we combine punitive voting on the one hand with adherence to liberal ideologies on the other, we may fall flat on our faces. Ours is a difficult decision to make. Both parties will do considerable horse trading on the basis of their comprehension of this, our dilemma. And into the outwitting process must go more political acumen and integrity than we have been receiving habitually from our politicians.

"To an inhabitant of the Negro world where discussions of the race problem weave through the entire fabric of life, it

is startling at long last to hear the word 'Negro' in news broadcasts all through the day, and to read the frank news items in the daily press about the racial controversy that rages in party councils. Such matters have been kept sub rosa within the memory of at least two generations, but now that their mention is no longer taboo, one gains the impression that the white world would like to purge itself of all its pent-up words and emotion on the subject. The feeling of guilt and the disposition to reform are no longer sectional peculiarities. In some strange fashion they have merged in both parties and are pulling on the national conscience.

"These developments are not illogical nor unrelated to social progress. They are directly grounded in the South's recognition that on some ultimate and not too remotely ultimate day, the Negro is going to vote in the South . . . (that) its days of political domination are numbered, for when the Southern Democrats are no longer held together by the necessity of excluding the Negro voter, the people of the South will begin to look more closely at men and issues, will become less 'solid' in their ignorance and blind adherence. . . ."—*From a column by Marjorie McKenzie, "Pursuit of Democracy," July 29, 1944.*

## THE MICHIGAN CHRONICLE

"Last week at Chicago the delegates to the national convention of the Democratic Party bowed to the iron will of a handful of conspirators and turned their backs on a courageous liberal who has won the love and loyalty of the common people everywhere and especially in his own country. The tragic rejection of Henry Wallace to appease the reactionary

elements within the Democratic Party comes at a time when acts of appeasement are most revolting. . . .

"Mr. Wallace has become a living symbol of American liberalism, and in the hearts of the Negro people he has won a place which few other leaders can claim today. It has been his uncompromising liberalism which has helped most to

## COMMON GROUND

maintain the loyalty and faith of the Negro people in the present administration in the last few years. He picked up the banner of the New Deal when the President saw fit to change it for the mantle of Doctor-Win-the-War. Mr. Wallace stood firm while others retreated. For these things he has become the idol of the common man and deserved a better fate.

"These war years have wrought great changes in the mind and spirit of our people. They have grown weary of legends, of petty patronizing concessions, of brave words which lose their meaning in mid-air. They are soul-sick of Jim Crow, of public humiliation and universal scorn. Trapped and bound by the circumstance of color, they have seized tenaciously every democratic straw, hoping that the day may shortly come when they may be permitted to live with dignity and enjoy the freedom for which they are paying on every battle front so great a price.

"To play cheap politics with these hopes and to destroy the promises of the future is a profound mistake for America to make today. Racial strife and violence can destroy our democracy just as surely as an Axis victory, and the rioting which paralyzed our major cities last year should be proof enough. Those national leaders who fight against intolerance and demand fairplay for all Americans are not merely championing the special cause of any one minority, they are helping to save America from internal disaster.

"In the last few years two men have spoken out boldly against the drift of America toward a racist maelstrom and both of them have been turned down by their respective political parties. The Republicans have eliminated Wendell Willkie and the Democrats sold Mr. Wallace down the river. Because of the liberal record of the Democratic Party, we regard the rejection of Mr. Wallace as the more

serious. The action of the convention indicates that the very views which once set Democrats apart from the reactionary Republicans have now become liabilities. Every other New Dealer save President Roosevelt himself has been crucified, and if the Democrats believed they could win without him, he too might have been defeated at Chicago.

"We believe that, unless the Democratic high command immediately begins to repair the damage done at Chicago in selling out Henry Wallace, this convention may well become the turning point in the political fortune of the Democratic Party. The silly boast of Democratic bosses at the convention that Negroes and Organized Labor 'have no place to go' may drive the minorities into the reactionary fold of the Republican Party against their better judgment. The wounds inflicted at Chicago will not be healed by salving them with salt.

"The liberal spirit of the Democratic Party has been its greatest strength and unless this liberalism is positively championed during the coming campaign, the Negro people will not ally themselves with the bosses and bigots on a gamble that the President will be able to whip the reactionaries in line and continue his policies which have won him Negro support in the last three elections. Negroes do not regard themselves as political expendables in the fight for power and they are not willing to be sacrificed to maintain a legend.

"The Democratic pledges for world peace do not obscure the fact that racism is one of the most important causes of conflict in the modern world, and unless the racist thinking in America is challenged, all of the international machinery in the world will not stop wars in the future. Any peace pact which does not extend to the colored peoples of the world the opportunity to develop and grow in

freedom will be short-lived and in the end disastrous.

"We issue this warning because we have championed the liberal program of the Democratic Party and have fought the rise of reactionary Republicans. We believe also that no living American can better shape the course of the future than President Roosevelt. He has the vision and the ability, the knowledge and the experience which the leadership of

this country in the months ahead will require. Nevertheless, he must speak out now against the rising tide of reaction which will destroy the fruits of victory and render world peace in the long run impossible. He must not permit the liberal spirit to die in the false belief that democracy in America can stand still until an armed victory is declared on some foreign battlefield."—*Editorial, July 29, 1944.*

## • Miscellany •

COMMON GROUND AUTHORS appear on many publishers' lists this Fall. Melvin B. Tolson's *Rendezvous With America* was published late in August by Dodd, Mead. This is Mr. Tolson's first book of verse, and the first by a Negro poet for Dodd, Mead to publish since Paul Lawrence Dunbar. The title poem is, of course, the long poem which appeared in the Summer 1942 issue of CG, a poem which struck instant response with our readers and has been broadcast and reprinted steadily in the two years since it appeared. Marie Syrkin will appear in September on the L. B. Fischer list with *Your School: Your Children*—two chapters of which, on anti-Semitism and Jim Crow in the classroom, first saw print in our pages. George and Helen Papashvily's *Anything Can Happen* is scheduled for October as a "Harper Find," and CG readers who have followed the Papashvilys in COMMON GROUND for several years will not want to miss this volume. Carey McWilliams is on the Little, Brown list for Fall with *Prejudice: Japanese Americans*, one chapter of which appeared in our Summer number. Leon Z. Surmelian's autobiographical volume was first scheduled for this Fall by E. P. Dutton, but

has been postponed until Spring. And—in another field—Herbert Kubly, our Swiss American expert, will see his first play, *Men to the Sea*, produced on Broadway in September by Eddie Dowling. The play, Mr. Kubly tells us, has a COMMON GROUND theme.

AVAILABLE FROM THE NEW YORK OFFICE of the War Relocation Authority, Room 5516, 350 Fifth Avenue, New York City 1, are two sound movies, filmed in color and produced by the WRA of the Department of the Interior: "A Challenge to Democracy" (16mm., 20 minutes), which tells the story of the 110,000 evacuated Japanese Americans and how the United States government is handling their problem in the centers and under the resettlement program; and "Go for Broke" (16mm., 10 minutes), which depicts the training of the 442nd Combat Team of Japanese Americans at Camp Shelby, Mississippi, a unit which has been frequently in the headlines in the fighting in Italy.

FRIENDS OF THE AMERICAN WAY, a West Coast organization working actively for better understanding and treatment of

## COMMON GROUND

Japanese Americans (1360 West Colorado Street, Pasadena 2, California), reports that 150 letters were lately sent to the War Department by individuals and families in and about Pasadena, promising temporary homes, aid in finding employment, and a spirit of genuine friendship when the government permits Japanese Americans to return to the West Coast. The letters resulted from a sampling of sentiment in this one important California community. "Goodwill," they report, "inarticulate and underground, is thus rising to the surface. The plan was simple and should succeed in other communities."

IN THE SPRING ISSUE OF CG we called attention to a project to put individual youngsters or class teachers in touch with the proper authorities in the War Relocation Centers for an exchange of correspondence between Japanese American boys and girls in the Centers and youngsters of other backgrounds on the "outside." The response was slight, and the need for the Center young people to maintain outside contacts is very great. The problem of keeping up morale and faith in the "American way" under confinement is a tough one; these youngsters are definitely war casualties. Teachers and group leaders who can rouse the latent goodwill and understanding of the young people with whom they are in contact, to stimulate this kind of correspondence, will be doing a definite job on the home front. Mrs. Afton Dill Nance of 329½ North Magnolia, Rialto, California, is the one to write to for names and addresses.

IN LOS ANGELES the local branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People has joined the American Civil Liberties Union in support of a suit brought by three Nisei, one of them the widow of a California soldier

killed in action in Italy, which seeks to enjoin Major General Charles H. Bene-steel, in command of the western defense area, and other military officials, from interfering with their return to their homes in California. If won, the action will serve as a precedent for the return of other Japanese Americans to the evacuated area. This is an interesting example of one disadvantaged group working to help another.

A WARM AND SIMPLE PROJECT in inter-group relations was worked out in Johnson, Vermont, this past summer by the Rev. A. Ritchie Low. Distressed over a religion and a liberalism that give only lip service to good race relations, he evolved a plan whereby his white parishioners could welcome into their homes for a two-week visit 73 colored youngsters from Harlem. So disappointed were many of his parishioners that there were not children enough to go around that Rev. Low plans to bring 250 to Vermont next summer. A story by Lula Jones Garrett in the Afro-American reports that, as a result of letters received from all over the nation, Rev. Low feels confident such a project could be worked out in the South as well as in Vermont. The experiment was apparently an eye-opener to those who participated, on both sides of the color line.

WITH THE GENERAL PURPOSE of trying "to foster humane understanding and sound friendship between the young of all nationalities, races, and creeds," Youth of All Nations, Inc. was launched at an inaugural dinner in late May. Letter-writing is an important tool in their projected work—to give a kind of "correspondence course in humanity." Some of the current activities include sending letters of welcome to children newly arrived in the United States, granting



them immediate awareness of a friendly democratic spirit; inviting newcomers to tell the story of their coming and give their first impressions of this country; getting American-born youngsters to formulate and exchange their own ideas about the values of learning to understand boys and girls of all nationalities, races, and creeds; devising various kinds of jointly-written letters (group composed at local meetings) to young people in faraway countries like China. Clara Leiser is founder and executive director, 16 St. Luke's Place, New York City 14.

COMMON GROUND'S EMPHASIS on the dangers of racism in the United States still draws fire from some of our readers. Accompanying a check for the work of the Common Council came this note from a New York subscriber: "I cannot send the enclosed without some protest about the latest issue of the magazine. I think the tone of it is most unfortunate and militates strongly against the Negro cause. I have heard this criticism from a great many readers." On the other hand, almost in the same mail, came a letter from New Hampshire: "Let me add my voice to those of your readers who approve of your articles about the Negro problem. (That sounds as if I thought there was only one Negro problem, but you know what I mean.) I should think every member of the D.A.R., and every other 'white' citizen of this country whose ancestors have been here for a hundred years or so, would burn with shame when he considers how the Negroes happened to be in this country at all, how there happen to be so many light-colored Negroes, and how, instead of trying to atone for our sins, we have added insult to injury ever since the Emancipation Proclamation. I, for one—and perhaps I had better say that I am white, and that my ancestors on both sides arrived on this continent in

1630—am painfully conscious of the white people's responsibility for the conditions under which Negroes have to live in what we like to think is the most democratic country on earth; and I don't think you can possibly give too much space to the problem."

MANUSCRIPTS AND LETTERS from people of goodwill, who would not be guilty of using the word "nigger," reach the CG editorial desk all too frequently with the words "darky" and "pickaninny," which are equally offensive to colored people. They are in the same class as "wop," "hunky," "kike," and "sheenie," though many white people are apparently not aware of this. The word Negro is capitalized, not written in lower case. It is "Chinese," not "Chinaman." And there are deep pitfalls in the way of better race relations in the use of thoughtless expressions like "nigger in the woodpile," "nigger heaven," and the like. Housecleaning in vocabularies is an imperative for the individual in building human democracy.

AFTER THE GREAT MEADOWS INCIDENT in New Jersey when five relocated Japanese Americans were driven out of the community and the shed of the man who had hired them was mysteriously burned, the Common Council called together representatives of some 20 to 30 national organizations which had New Jersey members to see what could be done to pool goodwill before bad will became too entrenched. As a result, a state-wide organization—the New Jersey Citizens Committee for Resettlement of Japanese Americans—took shape during the summer under the temporary chairmanship of the Rev. John H. Elliott, regional director of the National Conference of Christians and Jews. The Committee will work actively with the War Relocation

## COMMON GROUND

Authority in finding jobs and housing for resettled evacuees, and in creating a better understanding of their problem in the state.

RECENT PAMPHLETS of interest to CG readers include "Sleepy Lagoon Mystery" by Guy Endore, 15 cents, published by the Sleepy Lagoon Defense Committee, of which Carey McWilliams is chairman (129 West Second Street, Los Angeles 12, California). In the Sleepy Lagoon case, 17 Mexican American boys—so-called "zoot-suiters"—were tried before a judge notoriously prejudiced against anyone of Mexican descent, and after beatings, forced confessions, and newspaper terrorism thrown into jail, some of them for life sentences, for a murder that was never even established as a murder and may have been due to an automobile accident. The pamphlet gives the story in popular style and calls for an aroused American opinion to see that justice is done the boys. The formation of the Committee, Mr. McWilliams points out in his introduction, "represents the first well-organized and widely-supported effort in Southern California to bring the case of the Mexican, or the citizen of Mexican descent, to the attention of all the people of the area" and correct "those stereotyped attitudes which have long resulted in more than one type of discrimination against the Mexican. We are seeking to correct a social as well as a case of individual injustice." To contribute funds or distribute literature, address inquiries to the Committee directly.

Mr. McWilliams' own pamphlet, "What About Our Japanese Americans?" published by the Public Affairs Committee in co-operation with the American Council of the Institute of Pacific Relations (30 Rockefeller Plaza, New York City 20), is based on the findings of his comprehensive study of the Japanese

Americans before and after Pearl Harbor, soon to be published by Little, Brown and Company under the title *Prejudice: Japanese Americans*. This is a compact and invaluable summary for COMMON GROUND readers to have on hand in their communities to help spread understanding. 10 cents a single copy.

A booklet, "Spanish Speaking Americans in the War," furnishes useful material on another group of our population. Published by the Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs (Materials Section, 1201 Walker Building, 734 15th Street, N.W., Washington 25, D.C.), it has both English and Spanish texts and is profusely illustrated. Free.

"The Police and Minority Groups" by J. E. Weckler and Theodore E. Hall, published by the International City Managers' Association (1313 East 60th Street, Chicago 37), presents recommendations on police techniques to prevent disorder and to improve relations between different racial, religious, and national groups. The report is based on analyses of action taken by police forces of 30 cities during recent tense racial situations and on the ideas and comments of many police and other municipal officials. Single copies 50 cents.

If CG readers missed hearing about "Divide and Conquer," a playlet first conceived and produced for children in the Amityville, New York, primary school, here is late word about it. Written by Allan Sloane and Bob Russell, it is available at 25 cents a single copy or 15 cents a copy in lots of 25 or over from the Green Publishing Company, Amityville, New York. Easily staged and simple to produce, it dramatizes the fascist tactic of setting religion against religion, Negro against white, to create discord and internal weakness: "So Hitler gets everybody fighting everybody else and he takes over and becomes head man."

## • The Bookshelf •

CONDUCTED BY HENRY C. TRACY

### AMERICA IS THE PEOPLE

*AMERICA.* By Stephen Vincent Benét. New York: Farrar & Rinehart. 122 pp. \$1.50

Written for the people of other lands, and for translation into many languages, this short interpretive history of the United States (completed just before the author's death) shows clearly that the story of America is that of the people who have made it. As Mr. Benét expressly says, a list of great battles does not tell the story. It is in the hearts of men and women. Their hopes, dreams, faiths, urges, good and bad designs for progress, clashing loyalties and tragic mistakes, along with the struggle to right them—these are the real story, wonderfully well handled in this brief, brilliant writing. It is also a true American's declaration of faith in his own land and his countrymen. There have been sad perversions of the dream and the motive—as when between wars their thoughts centered on work, growth, and money—but beneath and behind all that there was and still is a spirit and an idea. It is this spirit and this idea which Mr. Benét, beloved poet and prose writer, sought to bring into clear light here. He has succeeded.

In André Maurois' *The Miracle of America* (Harper. \$3.50) we see the same theme treated more formally by a gifted Frenchman, whose dispassionate judgment has been verified in a series of famous biographies and studies in history. He himself describes this as "an impartial observer's impression of old

become incidental—almost dissolved out controversies." But these controversies of the picture by removal of their opaqueness—while the real aim is well stated as "an attempt to trace the amazingly rapid development of a great nation and to describe how a people translated a splendid ideal into a working democracy." M. Maurois has written a complete history, from the discovery of America to the present time. The facts may be familiar, but the manner of presenting them is discerning and refreshing, scholarly without being tedious, not blind to flaws and crudities.

In 1912 the people elected a leader, hailed as champion of the people's rights, and in 1916 they re-elected him and saw him grow to be a world figure and Europe's idol. But in 1919 they would not follow him out into a wider world where they—as a nation—would be responsible. They saw him go down to defeat, a tragic figure, his vision shattered, his body broken. And so they remembered him—a monumental failure. But some saw it otherwise, and more are seeing it now, in another light. Among them is Gerald W. Johnson, eminent journalist and biographer, whose brief script and running comment for the pictorial life-story of Woodrow Wilson (Harper. \$2) is the swiftest, keenest writing of the kind we have seen. Here is the essence of a growing character, each phase of it, deftly disentangled from the maze of rumor and misinformation—the faults listed, even the virtues rated as "irritating," but withal the vision, only now

ready for our grasp. Two hundred and sixty authentic photographs of the events, scenes, and persons in the great drama of 1912 to 1920 make the volume a great piece of recording. (In this task, the editors of Look Magazine collaborated.) A deeply moving story.

W. E. Woodward's *The Way Our People Lived* (Dutton. \$3.95) covers American living from 1650 to the author's own youth. Not personages or great characters, but actual and ordinary persons come to life in these pages; live and move; go about their business and, without knowing it, dissolve history into the everyday current of their lives. Scenes are arranged by chapters: A furniture shop in Boston 300 years ago. A Puritan Village in 1680—private conduct regulated by law and "Women beware of straining your intellects!" At home with a Virginia planter in 1713—hospitality a passion, and leisure and pleasure attending gentlefolk. New York in 1750—Major Lawrence, his family affairs and his cronies. Philadelphia, 1776, and a young Southerner seeing it and the notables at the Continental Congress, in letters to his mother. Georgia in 1807—an Augusta household—"Mrs. Earle's specialty in life was good breeding." New York to Cincinnati, a travelog of 1836—Susan Pettigrew's amazing journey by rail, horsecars, canal-boats, and inclined planes. Four Memphis youths in the Gold Rush of '49—more authentic letters. Chicago, 1871—Jeff Martin, fresh from Maryland, starting life there. Cotton Mill Vil-

lage, South Carolina, 1880—the author's youth there. Back to New York in 1908. All this is done in the happiest manner possible, a treat for any reader.

Like the preceding, *Far North Country* by Thames Williamson (Duell, Sloan and Pearce. \$3) could be called a book of the year for its outstanding quality, its apt telling of the story of a land through the lives of its people. Knowing them and their great new abode of giant mountains, forests, frozen waste, and fertile coastal valleys, Williamson tells their story from the inside, from the eager mind and intrepid courage of its people. In their confidence, he is their mouthpiece. There they are, and there too are the scoundrels who infest every frontier, to gut any wealth there discovered. The story of "the Terrible Finn" whose mine they tried to steal is the best in the book and unique among frontier annals. All of it is richly rewarding.

Fred Landon's *Lake Huron* (Bobbs-Merrill. \$3.50), one of the American Lakes series, attends with care to historic sequence and scholarly accuracy, for the book is, primarily, a history of the Lake and the life-tides that have flowed through and around it since the French knew it as La Mer Douce. But space has been found for ample human interest, in narrative and episode, in which priest and trader, British or French agent, traveler, adventurer, and eccentric character are involved. The epilogue, on activities since Pearl Harbor, is news overlooked by the daily press.

## GROUP RELATIONS IN AMERICA

Speakers whose addresses appear in *Group Relations and Group Antagonisms*, edited by R. M. MacIver (Harper.

\$2), present a nation-wide problem from a dozen different angles and from as many cultural backgrounds or national origins.

Rather strikingly their views converge—toward a solution. No quick solvent of these ingrained antagonisms is seen. The talks break ground for further study and for the slow task of reorganization of group relationships. The idea of national uniformity is rejected; a cultural pluralism is preferred. None favors conformity induced by pressure. Economic and political assimilation is stressed for the Italian American groups (Max Ascoli, President of the Mazzini Society speaking). The Negro's problem tangles with that of the share-cropper—economic disability at its root (Alain Locke). True, this is envenomed by racial attitudes, but these, as editor MacIver has said in an opening address, arise from group images, distortions of reality, amenable only to widespread social reform and enlightenment. Mousheng H. Lin found these distortions prevalent in misconceptions of the Chinese as Americans see them today.

Internal factions and clashing ideologies nearly wrecked the cause of labor during the period covered by Benjamin Stolberg's *Tailor's Progress* (Doubleday, Doran. \$2.75). A history of the rise and progress of one great labor movement—that of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union—could not be written without reference to the struggle of all unions and of the factions within them. The "Conquest of Chaos" chapter makes this clear. Needful, too, was a sharp characterization of the men and women who by power of personality or of astute leadership shaped policies and drew warring elements toward a common end. The birth and growth of the International, out of the Gehenna of the sweatshop of 1890, into the admirable organization it is today, makes an epic story. Mr. Stolberg has told it with skill. Besides a swift delineation of successive stages in the integration of the now famous ILGWU,

here are pen-portraits—a gallery of them—of leaders from Gompers on, all shrewdly and sharply etched.

*Organized Labor and the Negro* by Herbert R. Northrup (Harper. \$3.50) is a comprehensive study of the influence of the unions upon economic opportunity for Negroes. Of special interest here is an inquiry into what conditions have made attitudes so varied and often inconsistent, as in certain AFL affiliates. The market, the nature of the industry, and prevailing local feeling seem to be the main factors. With the CIO, however, race discrimination is not only declared against but is in actual practice ruled out. Of the Garment Workers' Union (reviewed above), Northrup writes: "Their policies reflect a broad social philosophy to which race discrimination is repugnant."

Dr. G. E. E. Lindquist's brief but cogent little volume on *The Indian in American Life* (Friendship Press. \$1) urges a full share for the American Indian in our common national life—economic, social, and political—not on moral grounds only but because he deserves it, has proved both his ability and his worth. His hunting economy doomed from the first, his way of life denuded, adequate restoration is overdue him. Wardship is an anachronism. Full participation in American life is what we now owe.

For an admirable study of the older Indian beliefs and attitudes toward life, which must not be too abruptly displaced by the modern, see *The Navaho Door*, by Lt. Alexander H. Leighton and Dorothea C. Leighton (Harvard Press. \$4). The Leightons have brought medical and psychiatric experience to this study. Entirely sympathetic, it illumines our approach to the tribal mind where it still functions. How finely they have done their work is attested in a preface by John

## COMMON GROUND

Collier, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, who sees in this study light thrown not merely on Navaho Indian experience—"they moved into the center of the Navaho's world-view and of his life effort"—but on all cross-cultural contacts involving racial and minority problems.

Ruth Muskrat Bronson in *Indians Are People, Too* (Friendship Press. \$1) writes of Indian Americans as only one of them can: of the traumatism induced by wardship and the reservations, from which they are only now emerging; of the rule of the old men, stifling to the young who prefer the way of individual achievement and have proved their powers in many fields. But she points also to values we would do well to retain. The Indian way of life was not one of aggressive competition. It had beauty and steadfastness of purpose. Mrs. Bronson has written wisely and well: not of a dying race, but of a vigorous, growing people.

Current publications on race and group relations reveal two trends: a liberal movement that reaches out toward all minorities, and one of protest from the victims of group antagonisms. Thus F. Tredwell Smith's *An Experiment in Modifying Attitudes Toward the Negro* (Teachers College Bureau of Publications. \$1.85) deals with experimental group work to promote cultural contacts and with tests of attitudes resulting, showing gains.

Many of the poems in *We Who Would Die* by Binga Dismond (Wendell, Malliet & Company. \$2) are poems

of protest. Not all—for many are in a homely genre—but, among others, the title poem that closes with this legend for soldiers' headstones:

"Here lie not Blacks; here lies not Jew;  
But here lie men who loved their  
land. . . ."

*Rising Above Color*, edited by Philip Henry Lotz (Association Press. \$1.50), presents brief biographies of thirteen outstanding Negroes. The challenge here is in the distinction, fairly won, and the accomplishment under grave handicaps of George Carver, Marian Anderson, W. E. B. DuBois, Walter White, and others.

Ben Hecht's *Guide to the Bedevilled* (Scribner's. \$2.50) deals with anti-Semitism, lifts the subject out of the cooling vat and keeps it boiling; reverses the traditional attitude of non-resistance. Time—this author-playwright thinks—to strike back. And he does, with shrewd blows, stinging metaphors, and some psychiatric finesse. A part of the book is autobiographical. Mr. Hecht has made this his personal fight. In proving Jew-hating a phobia and a disease, he scores brilliantly.

*Behold the Jew* by Ada Jackson (Macmillan. \$1) is a long poem which won the Greenwood Prize in Great Britain last year. It is a lyrical tribute to people whose prophets, singers, thinkers, and leaders have so often shaped or changed the course of history, and is also a tribute of personal feeling. The lines are poignant, the words bleed.

## MISCELLANEOUS

Of interest to second-generation Ukrainians and to students of literature gener-

ally is Clarence Manning's *Ukrainian Literature* (Ukrainian National Associa-



tion. \$1.50) in which leading authors are studied in relation to their time and the social conditions of a troubled period of two hundred years. We read of Hrihori Skovoroda, a Socrates among the people; of Taras Shevchenko, bard of the Ukraine; Ivan Levitsky, who sought to free the native feeling from a gathering veneer of European polish; and others, each noted for a special contribution toward preservation of their literature as a true medium

to express the sorrows and aspirations of the people of the Ukraine.

In Harold Wentworth's new *American Dialect Dictionary* (Crowell. \$6) every regional variation, including localisms and mispronunciations, finds a dignified place. This is a dictionary of folk speech (not slang), of 15,000 terms, expertly localized, with key to pronunciation in the Phonetic Association's code.

## NOVELS OF UNDERSTANDING

Three short novels stand out as contributions to the understanding of one's fellow-man. We might well challenge any writer to produce in equal space (187 pages) as clear a reading of the minds of American boys (members of a platoon on an invasion coast, of varied background and extraction, each an individual) as you'll find in Private Harry Brown's *A Walk in the Sun* (Knopf. \$2). The scene is a beachhead, across from Messina, the action one day. Chance isolation and the loss of their leaders bring the resources of each man into play, and with them a revelation of what he thinks, says, and is. But for the names—Rand, Tyne, Porter, Archimbeau, Friedman, Rivera, Tranella—we should have no hint of different nationality origins; and there is no single sign among the men of any feeling that this matters. Each gives his best, takes what comes, leads, or follows; each knows that in this one-day world where time stands still and death makes ambush all distinctions of race and social level are a senseless blank.

Robert Bright's *The Life and Death of Little Jo* (Doubleday, Doran. \$2) re-

veals the natural, dry humor of the village folk in New Mexico's backland. Thus old Cornelio's shaft for Luz, who has lived in town and would reform things: "She feels we are all unsanitary because we desire to be near God and comfortable." Little Jo (José) is a natural-born individual, a sprite that should never be tamed—but Luz's victim. While the story centers about him, it involves all the life of the village and nearly everybody in it.

While Robert Bright writes from the angle of a discerning grown-up, Charles L. McNichols in *Crazy Weather* (Macmillan. \$2) gives the story of South Boy (white) among the Fort Mojave Reservation Indians from a boy's angle—his own, for he was raised there and retains his impressions with singular sharpness. Now a child's perception grasps the whole character or situation in a way an adult cannot, once he has grown analytical. This sense of immediacy and wholeness, McNichols has kept all through his well-knit short novel of a white boy plunging deep into the life of his Indian friends, trying to drink in all of it in one fierce draft before he is dragged away by the

clutch of a white civilization. Torrid heat and drought and electric weather make a backdrop for this heady, super-saturate Indian story.

Three full-length novels deal with men and women involved in the issue of Negro slavery. Frances Gaither's *The Red Cock Crows* (Macmillan. \$2.75) goes back to pre-Civil-War days and gives us the glamour and gaiety of the Old South along with certain sinister traits common among folk of that time, and the first stirrings of trouble menacing their care-

free Eden. Somewhat later, with a northern setting, Constance Robertson's *Fire Bell in the Night* (Holt. \$2.75) gives us tense and turbulent action in an underground station in Syracuse in abolition days. Howard Fast in *Freedom Road* (Duell, Sloan and Pearce. \$2.75) writes of the Reconstruction with the uncompromising realism his readers so well know. His point of view is that of the freed Negro, falsely flattered, then basely deserted by white men from the North.

## FOR BETTER RELATIONS WITH LATIN AMERICAN NATIONS

In *The Americas and Tomorrow* (Dutton. \$3) Virginia Prewitt gives the background facts about Latin America and follows with a survey of our relations and the story of inter-American co-operation. This is a vigorous defense of the Good Neighbor Policy. One reviewer (Aikman) has called it "this year's Grade-A primer both for doubters and for inquiring minds."

Charles Morrow Wilson's *Middle America* (Norton. \$3.50) centers on the condition and needs of the people in those nations nearest us—Mexico, the six countries of Central America, and the three island republics of the Caribbean area. He presents an extensive and accurate account of crops and products, all needed and most of them non-competitive with ours. He points up, also, the injury done to native populations by collusive, anti-social policies of cartels in ways that have damaged human interest the world over. Here too are stories of the struggle to combat tropical maladies and

of the truly great men who are at the front of it—among them the story of Dr. Ricardo Aguilar-Meza, a unique and telling life sketch.

The Brazilian classic, *Os Sertoes*, by Euclides da Cunha, now appears in a flawless translation by Samuel Putnam, as *Rebellion in the Backlands* (Chicago University Press. \$5). This truly great work breathes space, nature, new lands, primal forces, and men shaped by them: a new race emerging—the sertanejos. But these virile folk, neglected and exploited by city landowners, fall a prey to their half-crazed Messiah, called Conselheiro. Faith flames to epic rebellion, suppressed by force. The tale is Homeric, yet true in every detail and told by one who as engineer took part in the campaign, but who as humanist and scholar, master of prose writing, made of the story "a moment in the lore of humanity" and "a towering peak in Brazilian literature," a masterpiece of which any nation could be proud.

Have you read  
America's most  
talked of novel?

# Strange Fruit

by

**LILLIAN SMITH**

Reynal & Hitchcock \$2.75



ON OCTOBER 25th

**Harper & Brothers**

will publish

## **ANYTHING CAN HAPPEN**

By **GEORGE AND HELEN**

**PAPASHVILY**

Some chapters of this most engaging record of the Americanization of a Russian have appeared in **COMMON GROUND**. If you remember with delight "The Sound of Home," "The First Day" or "Yes, Your Honesty" you will want the Papashvilys' whole story in their new book. A Harper "Find."

*Reserve a copy now at any bookstore*  
\$2.50

**HARPER & BROTHERS, N.Y.**

### **Bound Volumes**

OF

### **COMMON GROUND**

With Index

VOL. I, II, III, or IV

\$3 EACH

Your own copies of **COMMON GROUND** bound for you in permanent form at \$1.85 per volume.

Order from

**COMMON COUNCIL**  
for American Unity  
222 Fourth Avenue  
New York 3, N.Y.

# Group Relations and Group Antagonisms

EDITED BY

**R. M. Mac Iver**

*Professor of Political Philosophy and  
Sociology, Barnard College and  
Columbia University*

Discussions by leaders of various religious and racial minorities who are trying to achieve a new social code worthy of a civilized people that believes in its democracy.

"We cannot speak too highly of the intellectual detachment of the authors nor of the singular lucidity with which they interpret conflicts so vital and confusing."—*N.Y. Times*. \$2.00

# Probing Our Prejudices

**By Hortense Powdermaker**

A book for thinking people to help them realize the influence of intolerance and racial discrimination. It is a highly readable human interest story with liberal anecdotes to illustrate how to distinguish between prejudices and facts, how to identify prejudices and how to remove them. \$1.00

**HARPER & BROTHERS**  
49 East 33rd Street, New York 16

# FOREIGN INFLUENCES IN AMERICAN LIFE

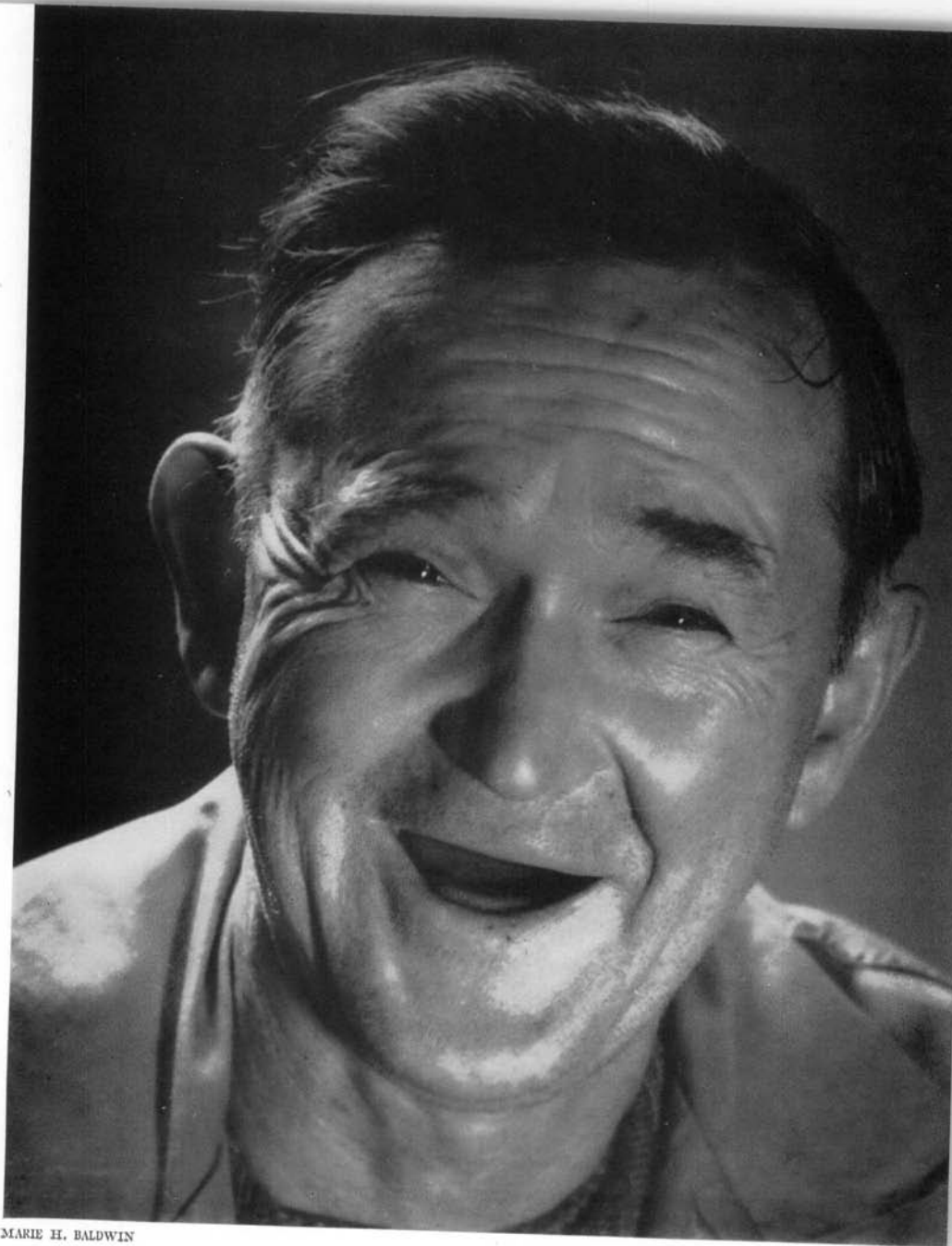
*Essays and Critical  
Bibliographies*

EDITED FOR THE  
PRINCETON PROGRAM OF STUDY  
IN AMERICAN CIVILIZATION

BY DAVID F. BOWERS

After analyzing the phenomenon of social and cultural impact, this volume goes on to consider the specific social and historical role of the immigrant, and to examine crucial instances of his influence in the evolution of our economic, political, artistic, literary, and philosophic life. The contributors include men distinguished in many fields: David F. Bowers, Stow Persons, J. G. Leyburn, Frank D. Graham, Oscar Handlin, Donald Drew Egbert, and R. P. Blackmur. \$3.00

PRINCETON UNIVERSITY  
PRESS, PRINCETON, N.J.



MARIE H. BALDWIN

*Born in Ireland*



MARIE H. BALDWIN

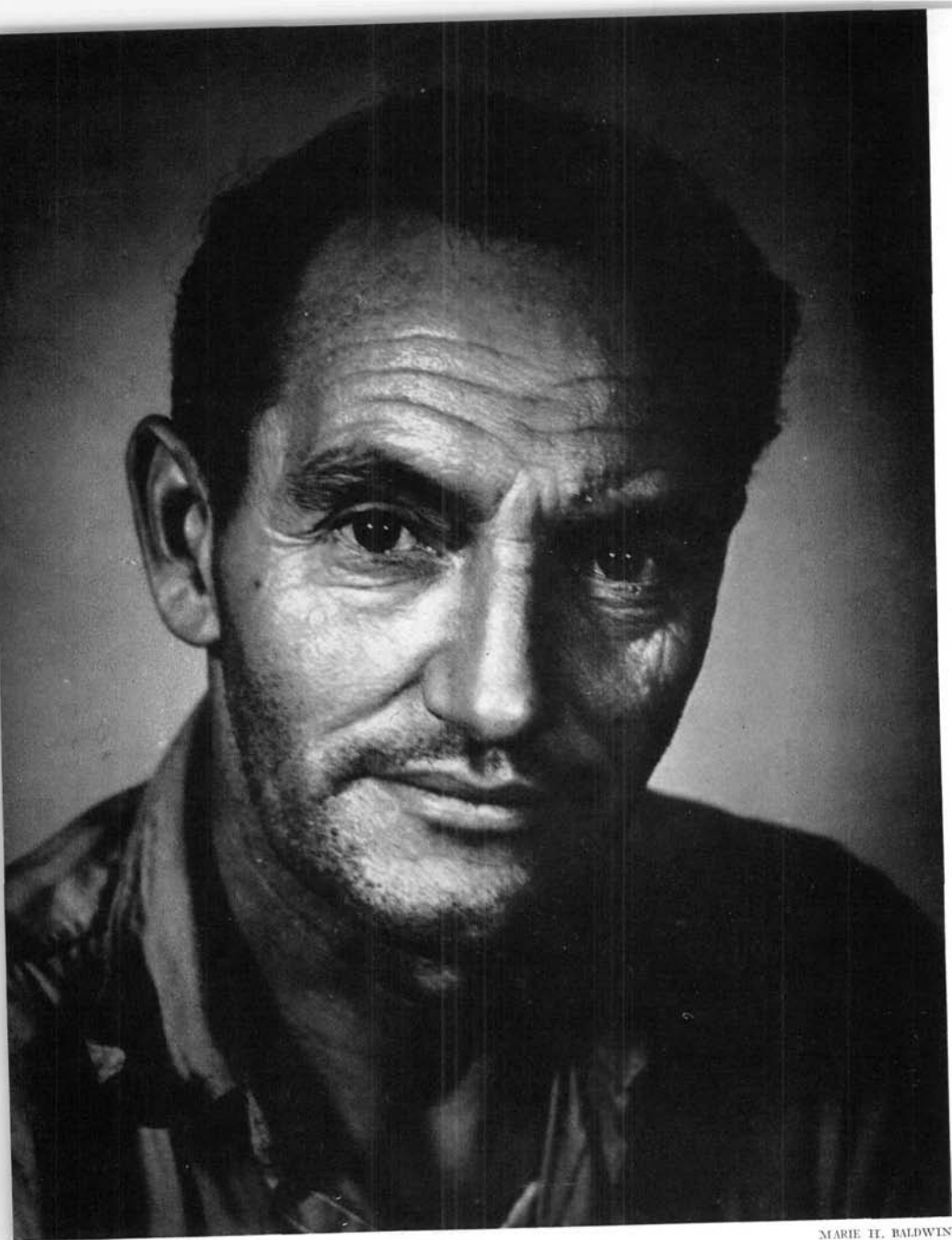
*Born of Argentinian parents  
in the Falkland Islands.  
At sea for 34 years.*





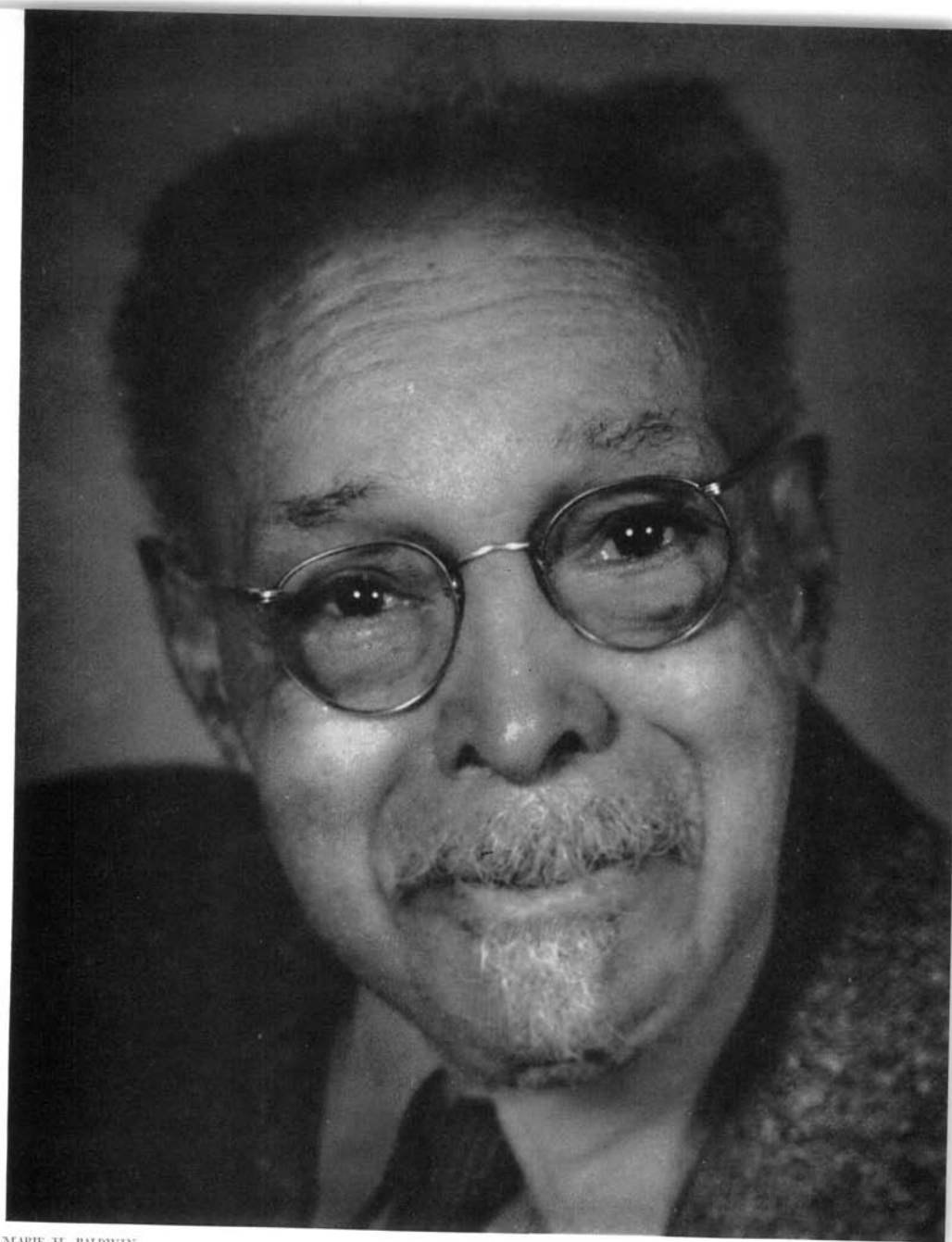
MARIE H. BALDWIN

*Born in Maine—part  
Indian ancestry*



MARIE H. BALDWIN

*His family came to  
America from Holland  
300 years ago.*



MARIE H. BALDWIN

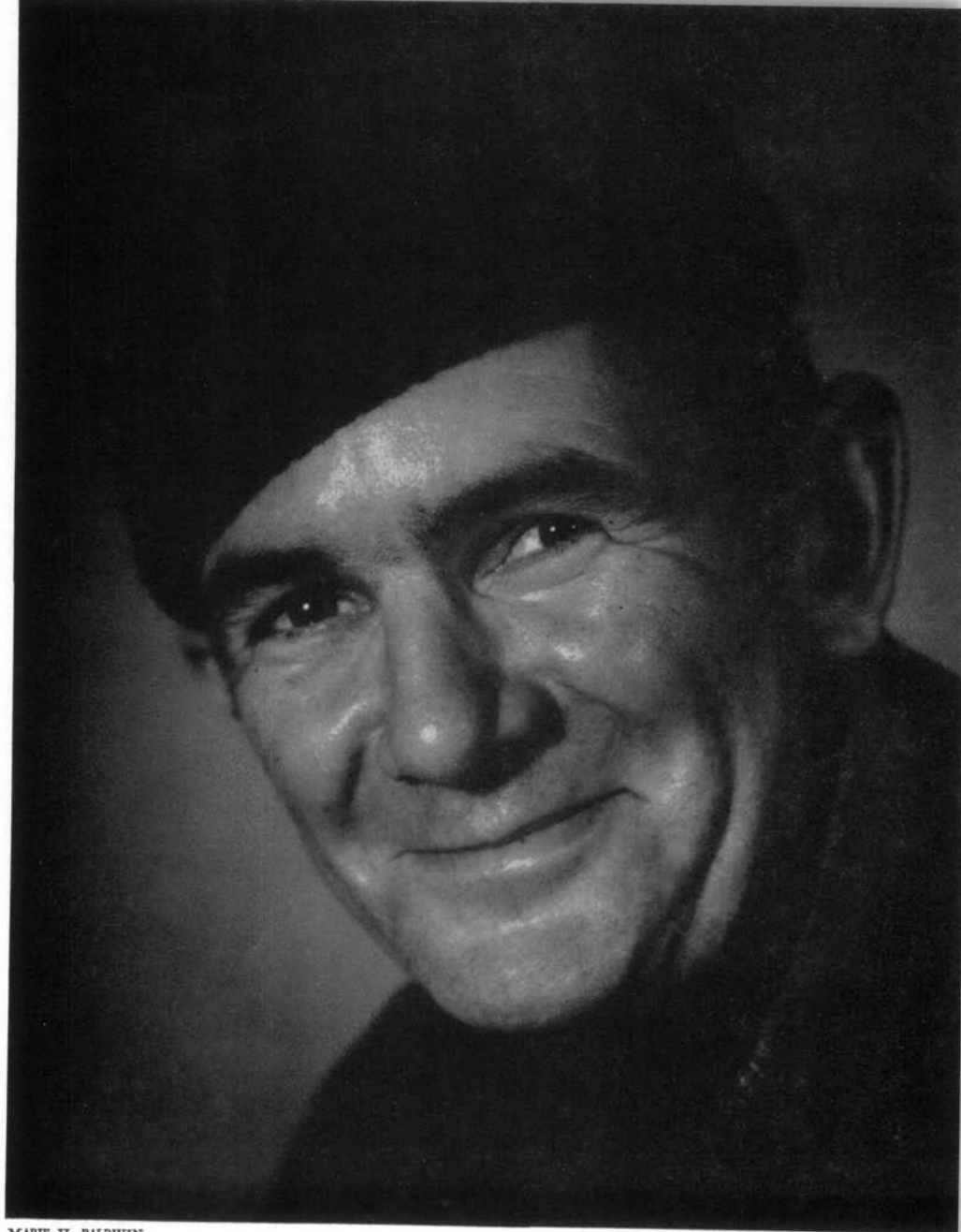
*A cabin boy at 14, this Negro high school music teacher volunteered at 78 when he heard the Merchant Marine needed men.*



MARIE H. BALDWIN

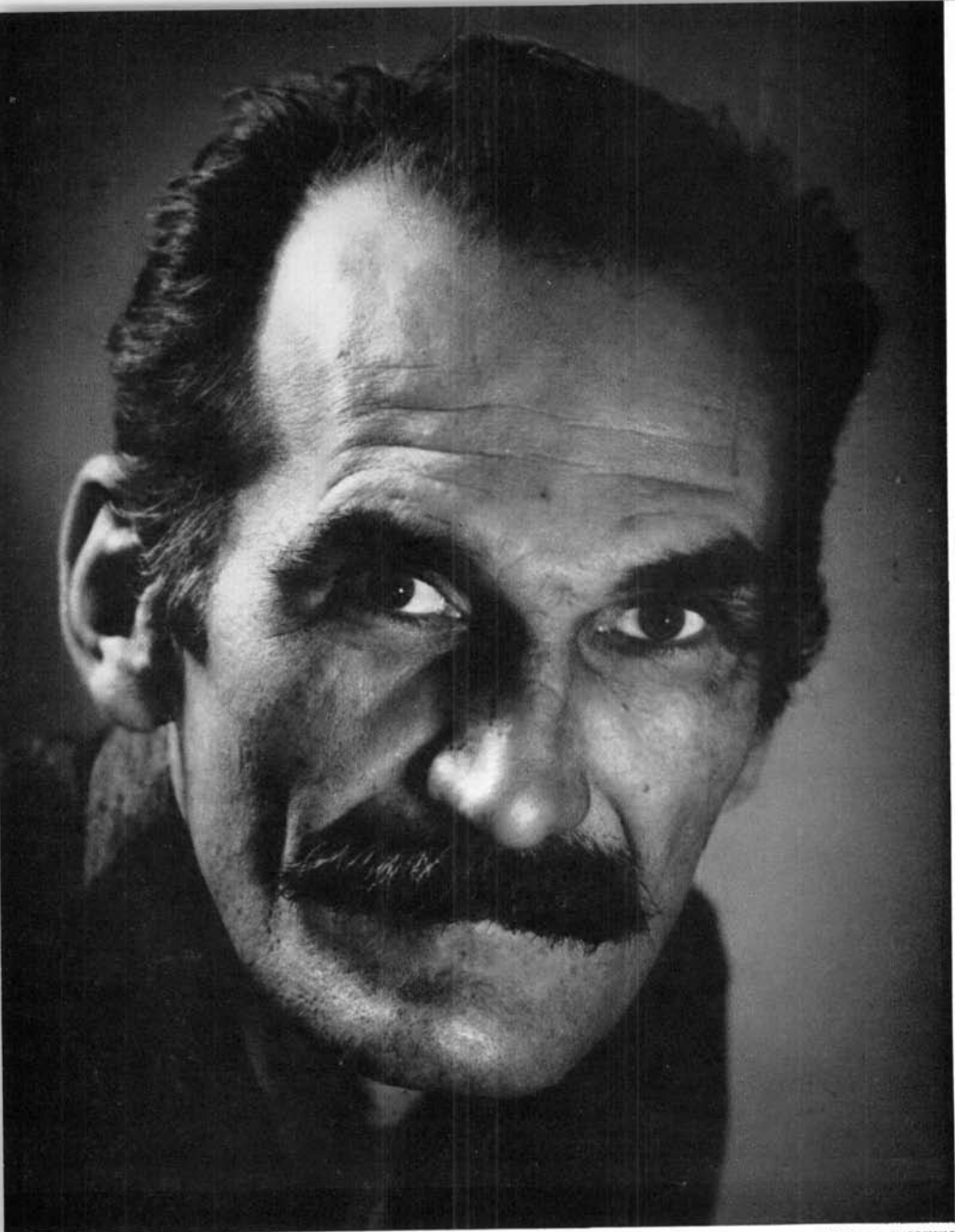
*American-born of  
Mexican and Indian ancestry*





MARIE H. BALDWIN

*The Merchant Marine calls him  
a "typical American" seaman.  
He is New England-born.*



MARIE H. BALDWIN

*A mixture of all  
nationalities, American-born*